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Princess Daschkaw

Lady of honor to Catherine II.

From an original painting in the possession of the Editor.

Colburn, Great Marlborough Street 1840

MEMOIRS

OF THE

PRINCESS DASCHKAW,

LADY OF HONOUR TO CATHERINE II.

EMPRESS OF ALL THE RUSSIAS:

WRITTEN BY HERSELF:

COMPRISING

LETTERS OF THE EMPRESS,

AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE.

EDITED FROM THE ORIGINALS,

BY MRS. W. BRADFORD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION,

BY

THE EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION.

In appearing before the public as Editor of these Memoirs, unconnected with Princess Daschkaw by the ties of kindred or even of country, it becomes an obligation on my part to give some account of the occasion and manner of their coming into my possession; and in order to do this, so as to satisfy the expectation of those who feel an interest in whatever concerns this distinguished woman, as well as to meet the reasonable demands of every reader of this her history, it will be requisite to speak a little of so humble an individual as myself. I shall however, I trust, be pardoned, if at present I touch this subject as lightly as possible; because, for the information of those who may wish for a more copious detail than is suitable to a few prefatory pages, I have ventured, not without great reluctance and great diffidence, to subjoin to the

princess's work, a narrative, which I wrote many years ago, of my residence in Russia.

It was addressed to the late Sylvester Douglas, first Lord Glenbervie, who took a peculiar interest in the subject, as connected with the manuscript of Princess Daschkaw which I had submitted to his perusal, and of the immediate publication of which he was one of the warmest advocates.

It was his opinion that this account of myself, of my sojourn in, and departure from, Russia, would form a very appropriate accompaniment to the memoir. Sanctioned, therefore, by this testimony in its favour, by one so highly considered in the world of taste and letters as Lord Glenbervie, and encouraged by the persuasion of another, whose opinion had still greater weight in influencing mine, I have overcome my own scruples on this point; and chiefly because I am induced to believe that my own personal narrative, connected as it is with circumstances concerning the princess in the evening of her life, may supply some notices of her later history, after her removal from those agitating scenes of earlier days which occupy the principal portion of her own memoir. With this view I have been led to add other particulars, which

were not called for when the narrative was first written in the form of a letter. But when the princess is my theme, I find it difficult to stop, even at the risk of saying too much, where I must necessarily mingle my own name with the incidents which I have to relate.

Had I thought it right to do so, I might have added to the princess's manuscript, by introducing, here and there, conversations and anecdotes fresh from her own lips, which she did not think it worth while to insert. Latterly, indeed, she got tired, and hurried off the work, to my great regret. More than once I asked her why she did not write the agreeable things she recounted; and I always had for answer, "*My dear, I have no pride of the author, so you can put in and write of me, or in your preface, or at the end of your English, whatever you like to tell of your Russian mother.*"

And here I may remark in passing, that such was her singleness of purpose, her candour and plain dealing, and the absence of anything like pretension in her proceedings, that all her words and actions were clear and open to the world she lived in, as if the movements of her mind were seen through a glass window, and any one might be

permitted to look to the very bottom of her honest heart.

For the purpose of this introductory notice it may now be sufficient to state, that in the year 1803, then a young person, I went, with the approbation of my parents, to pass some time in Russia with Princess Daschkaw, who had been acquainted with my family during her residence in England and Ireland. This consent of my parents to a proposed absence of two or three years was, not without much unwillingness, conceded to my own earnest solicitation, prompted by a youthful love of travelling, as well as by another motive spoken of in my narrative, and to the encouragement given to my wishes by Mrs. Hamilton, daughter of Archbishop Ryder, a near relation of my father's, and the most intimate friend of Princess Daschkaw, whose frequent mention of this extraordinary woman, and in terms of the highest regard and admiration, had from my earliest years awakened in my mind a lively and enthusiastic feeling in her favour.

On my arrival in Russia, the princess was living in much retirement at Troitskoe, her country place in the government of Moscow, having long aban-

doned the great world, and being then devoted to those pursuits, of improving her estates and rendering her peasants happy, of which she sometimes speaks in the latter part of her Memoirs. My stay with her was protracted to five years, during which we usually passed the summers at her country place, and the winters at Moscow.

I could not long be an inmate of her house—where, from my first reception into it, I experienced all the affectionate distinction and kindness which a fond parent could shew to the most beloved child—without a daily increasing attachment to her on my part, and high admiration, when I contemplated her in the midst of her extensive influence, honoured and looked up to by all within its sphere.

She appeared to me a being of so superior an order, that I listened earnestly to every word she uttered which threw any light on her early life, and longed to hear more of it in detail. I thought also she owed it to herself, and to those who loved her, to let her character be known. A heart so true, a humour so playful and ready to be pleased, sentiments so warm at sixty-three years of age, must, I thought, be the result of a life of innocence and

goodness. I had not been more than a year under her roof when I ventured to express my wishes, and to urge her warmly to write the events of her life.

It was in the autumn of 1804 that, after some hesitation, she consented; and once begun, the work went on rapidly. She wrote from memory, without reference to any previous notes. It is probable, therefore, that some chronological inaccuracies may be detected in her Memoirs. With regard to facts, or the princess's conception of facts, the reader may be fully persuaded that it was not in her power so far to condescend as to give them partially, to varnish, or in any way willingly to misrepresent them. Truth, simple truth, was her leading characteristic, in all she said, or wrote, or thought.

Enough will certainly appear in the following pages to correct the false impressions of those who have known the Princess Daschkaw only through the medium of some popular works, wherein she is incidentally mentioned and described as a vain, designing, ambitious, and sometimes profligate woman. It is true, the portrait here presented is drawn by her own hand; it is her own version of

her own motives and actions. But such is the irresistible force of its internal evidence, that not a doubt can be entertained for an instant of its veracity and fidelity.

Surrounded as she was by a host of enemies, which her virtues alone had created in a corrupt and selfish court, where the pure qualities of a lofty mind could be little understood, and where an act of disinterestedness was an affair of personal offence, we cease to wonder that such a character should become a subject of misrepresentation, and even of calumny. Actuated, too, as she was known to be, by an almost unbounded love, and the most enthusiastic admiration, of Catherine the Second,—who, to her youthful imagination, and even throughout her maturer age, seemed to embody the *beau ideal* of a great and patriotic sovereign,—it might be surmised that those failings which disgraced the private life of the empress might be overlooked or participated in by her devoted friend. Had the princess really sympathized in these failings,—and snares were too often laid to entrap her,—many were the mortifications which she might have avoided, and much greater and less interrupted would have been the

favour which she enjoyed. But such was her high tone of sentiment, such her strength of principle, and such her uncompromising spirit, that vice, however honoured and dignified, never failed to excite her honest indignation; and on occasions where it presented itself in its offensive effrontery, seldom escaped without a stern or scornful rebuke.

It is unnecessary here to enlarge on the extraordinary self-devotedness and self-denial which mark the habits, and many of the incidents, of her life, referred to in these Memoirs. I would, however, anticipate a remark which may possibly be made—an expression of surprise or disappointment—that the circumstances leading to the revolution which first brought the princess into notoriety, and gave a tone and colour to her subsequent life, should not have been dwelt upon in more copious and precise detail. To some, the account here rendered may appear meagre and unsatisfactory. It might be expected that the great and bloodless change effected in the dethronement of a powerful monarch, could only be brought about by means of a well-concerted and well-organized conspiracy,—of which little or no trace is discernible in the present history. But let it be observed, that the princess

attributes success in this instance rather to what is usually called accident than to any pre-arranged scheme or design; and as no combination of enterprise or plot, or unity of purpose, is found to have directed the aims of the conspirators, little remained to be told, beyond the causes which occasioned, and the particulars which immediately preceded, such a result.

It was never, it will be further seen, the habit of the princess to magnify herself; and in speaking of the revolution which placed her friend and idol upon the throne, although she considered her own share in the work as the proudest circumstance of her life, she expresses herself uniformly with the unaffected simplicity, the brevity, and the candour of one who, as is elsewhere remarked, gave me the idea, more than any with whom I ever conversed, of a person speaking on oath, and one who certainly never exaggerated or coloured a fact for the purpose of heightening its effect.

But to descend from matter of high political import to a minor and very humble theme,—it is necessary to say a few words on what may seem to contradict the observation which I have just made—I mean the far too flattering expressions

which the kind princess has lavished upon me, in the dedicatory letter, and in the concluding paragraphs of her history. In performing my duty as editor, I feel scarcely at liberty to expunge these passages. Nor will I pretend to regret this; for with a full consciousness how little they were ever merited, I may, at the end of more than thirty years, acknowledge, from motives far different from any feelings of personal vanity, that those testimonies are still dear, most dear to my heart. I must entreat the reader, therefore, to bear with them, as proofs only of the princess's warm affection and too great partiality for those whom she loved—as expressions of her who called herself my *Russian mother*—a name of tenderness which her boundless kindness, shewn in many important favours and obligations, authorizes me with the deepest gratitude to acknowledge, and on this occasion publicly to plead.

Amongst the letters of the Empress Catherine, which the princess desired to be published along with her own work, are a few written when she was grand duchess, previously to, and about the period of, the revolution. Several, indeed all of any moment, which passed between them relative to that event, had, as a matter of precaution, been

destroyed by each party as soon as read. Those of somewhat earlier date, and the subsequent notes and fragments forming this collection, were carefully preserved by the princess, as memorials of her illustrious friend; and though scarcely deserving the name here given them, of letters, they are full of interest, as conveying a lively idea of the empress's playfulness of fancy and graceful good-humour, as well as of her taste for literary pursuits, which led her to devote intervals of leisure to little works of criticism and composition.

A few letters and other papers from the princess, placed in my hands for the purpose of publication, as well as those of some of her distinguished contemporaries, will find their place also in the second volume.

As this work was in preparation for the press, an idea was suggested to me, in which I readily concurred, that a selection from the letters of my eldest sister (who, in compliance with an invitation of the princess, most cordially expressed and urged, was induced to go to Russia, and to spend the greater part of two years with us,—letters written during that period to our friends in England)

might supply a fund of further and very animated illustration, to the subject of this Memoir.

The beloved relative of whom I speak (now alas! no more) still lives in the recollection of several surviving friends and acquaintance, who will recognise in the sprightly sallies of her pen, published at the conclusion of these volumes, traces of that vivid imagination, and originality of thought and humour, which gave a spirit and peculiarly graphic character to everything she said or wrote; powers which, with other solid and amiable qualities and accomplishments, rendered her society much sought and highly valued.

As many years have elapsed since the death of Princess Daschkaw, which occurred in 1810, should it be asked, why the publication of her Memoirs has been so long delayed, it would be difficult for me to render an answer to this question perfectly satisfactory to myself, or perhaps to the public.

I must fairly confess that at the period of the princess's death I had no other idea than simply to fulfil her well-known intentions, and give it at once to the world; but a feeling unfavourable to its publication, on the part of a near relative of the princess,

long resident in this country, but now deceased, induced me, without understanding his objections, to respect them, and to lay the manuscript aside. They were objections the more unexpected by me, as her eldest brother and earliest friend, Count Alexander Worontzoff, had read and approved the first volume, which was finished before his death.

I am, however, at length aroused to a recollection of what I owe to the memory of the princess; as time wears on, I am sensibly reminded that whatever I have further to do in life should not be unnecessarily delayed; and that whilst life is yet spared to me I ought myself to perform a duty so sacred to my feelings as the one I have now undertaken. To leave this duty as a legacy to be performed by others, might seem to intimate a want of moral courage or of exertion on my part,—which, thank God, I do not feel,—or some distrust as to the interest which the narrative itself is calculated to excite, or some doubt or scruple as to the propriety of publishing it. Not anything of this sort is the case.

It is not indeed for me to wage war against those writers who, in treating of the early times of Cathe-

rine the Second, have maligned the Princess Daschkaw. Without imputing to them any deliberate purpose of calumny, it is nevertheless just to observe that they spoke of her, perhaps thoughtlessly, but beyond a doubt, most ignorantly. From the prominent part she acted in bringing about the revolution of 1762, her name was necessarily connected with that event. She thus became a subject of history; but history has in some particulars foully misrepresented her, and in none has it done her justice.

Whether I ought not therefore to take some share of blame to myself for not having sooner given to the public this justification of her character, contained in her own simple and unaffected autobiography, and one so complete because so wholly unintended on her part as a justification, is a question which I am not quite prepared to answer, though my intentions have been blameless.

My consolation, however, is, that without me the Memoirs now before the reader would never have been written; and my earnest hope is that the public will at length receive with approbation an offering to that cause which is always dear to it—the cause of truth; and that through the medium of

the following pages the world may learn to know and render justice to one who was ever a most constant votary to that cause.

M. BRADFORD.

Rectory House, Storrington,
February, 1840.

LETTER

DEDICATORY TO MISS M. WILMOT,

BY THE

PRINCESS DASCHKAW.

my wish to have her here, was only
Selfishness, thou her acquaintance and
Society would gratify me much, but
I had two other reasons that were
nearer to my Heart 1°. that it would
make very happy Our child, 2°—
that feeling* my Self unwell
I was particularly so this winter
I wished that in case Heaven
[redacted]

Autograph Letter of the Princess Daschkaw to Mrs Wilmot

Deserved by now I ... ...
I am obliged to you; and what
I could Do for to prooove the ten=
derness and Estime that I have for
my young friend and adopted Daughter
in Regard to your Eldest Daughter
Dont Think my Dearest Madame that

LETTER

DEDICATORY TO MISS M. WILMOT,*

BY THE PRINCESS DASCHKAW.

It is your wish then, my young and dear friend, that I should trace the picture of my life,—a stormy and troubled one, I might call it, but perhaps more strictly speaking, a life of sorrow, aggravated, indeed, by the efforts which I have made to conceal from the world those distresses of the heart, of which neither pride nor fortitude could blunt the poignancy. In this respect I may be said to have lived a martyr to constraint: I say a martyr, for to disguise my sentiments, and to appear otherwise than I am, has ever been most repugnant and hateful to my nature.

My friends and relations have for many years urged me to the task which you now require. I

* The family name of the editor.

have resisted all their solicitations; but I find myself incapable of refusing yours. Here, then, I present to you the history of my life,—a painful story, which I might have worked into a touching romance. To you I dedicate it. It is written as I speak, without preparation, and with a frankness unsubdued even by the warnings of unhappy experience. I have passed over, it is true, or but lightly touched on, some occasions of mental anguish, arising out of the ingratitude of those whom I would justify, were it possible, at the expense of life. These are the only instances where my pen has been arrested; and the awakened remembrance of them even at this moment makes me shudder.

If in the course of this narrative it should appear that, to embark in the same vessel with the great ones of the earth is an enterprise replete with peril, and that the atmosphere of a court is fatal to the developments of a straightforward soul, it will also be seen that a conscience void of reproach can inspire fortitude and courage sufficient to set at nought a tyrant's animosity, and to enable those who are thus at peace with themselves to support persecutions the most unmerited. We may here

also find an example, how a certain degree of celebrity seldom fails to expose the object of it to envy, and to its sure attendant, calumny.

It was at sixty years of age, after much ill health, much unhappiness, and a rigorous exile, whilst living in retirement, and solely occupied with the welfare of my peasants, that my eyes first glanced over that tissue of falsehoods and vile imputations which some French writers had been pleased to fabricate and propagate, against the great Catherine; and which writers, as if it were necessary to the completion of their rancorous purpose, or encouraged by the licentiousness of the times, sought also to malign and blacken her unoffending friend, Catherine* the *Little*. In such works have I found your Daschkaw represented with all the vices most foreign to her character; sometimes as a person of the most criminal ambition, at others, as one abandoned to the grossest profligacy.

Hence it is easy to perceive that a life strictly moral, and passed for the most part in privacy, which few know how to appreciate, and fewer still are disposed to envy, is no security against the pen

* The princess's baptismal name.—Ed.

of the libeller, when dipped in the gall of bitterness, and employed to allay the feelings of jealousy, or to gratify the still more uncontrollable demands of unprovoked wickedness. Although Catherine the Second might have been known to deplore, and to have sought a remedy against, the evils which the *illuminati* and pretended philosophers were bringing upon unhappy France; and although they feared the power of one so truly great and formidable; can it be credited that these creatures should have thought to avenge themselves, in attacking a woman utterly without influence in the state or government, and seeking to wrest from her that which she valued above all things—a spotless reputation!

Such, however, has been the cruelty of my lot, that after Heaven in its anger had deprived us of our mother, our great and enlightened sovereign—when I could no longer enjoy her personal goodness to myself, or exult in the benefits which she heaped upon my country—I have become a victim to the malicious frenzy of her enemies.

This, however, we may hope, like everything else in this world, will pass away. Let me therefore rather speak to you, my dear young friend, of what much more now concerns us, of the tender

friendship which binds us to each other; and let me express, if it be possible, how deeply, how gratefully I feel your confidence in me, of which you have given the most touching proof, in quitting family and country, and coming hither to cheer the declining years of an old woman—one, however, who can truly boast that she has never lived a single day to herself alone.

Shall I tell you how precious to me is your society; how your talents, your modesty, your gaiety of heart, joined to those pure principles which direct all your actions, have gained my esteem and admiration? Shall I say how much you have contributed to tranquillize, to sweeten my existence? But where is the language which can do justice to these impressions? I will not seek therefore to multiply words, but confine myself to the simple assurance that I esteem, admire, and love you, with all the energy of that loving heart which you have learned to understand, and that these sentiments will end only with the last sigh of your sincere friend,

PRINCESS DASCHKAW.

Troitskoe,
27th October, 1805.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

PRINCESS DASCHKAW.

CHAPTER I.

Birth of Countess Catherine Worontzow (afterwards Princess Daschkaw)—Loses her mother in infancy—Her sisters appointed maids of honour—Her passion for reading—Tendency of her studies—Her opinion of Helvetius—Her early love of politics—M. Shouvaloff—Correspondence with her brother, Count Alexander—First interview with Prince Daschkaw—Their mutual attachment—Visit of the Empress Elizabeth—Her kindness—First meeting with the grand duchess (afterwards Catherine the Second)—Impression made by it—Marriage with Prince Daschkaw—Departure for Moscow.

I WAS born at St. Petersburg, in the year 1744, about the period of the Empress Elizabeth's return from Moscow, after the ceremony of her coronation. Her majesty held me at the baptismal font, and her nephew, the grand duke, afterwards emperor by the name of Peter the Third, was my godfather. I might have been honoured with this compliment in consideration of my uncle the grand

chancellor's marriage with a cousin-german of her majesty; but I rather attribute it to the sentiments of friendship which the empress entertained for my mother, who, during the former reign, with great generosity, and, I may add, with equal delicacy, supplied those pecuniary wants which her expensive taste, and then scanty allowance as princess, very frequently occasioned.

I had the misfortune to lose my mother when I was only two years old, and I have learned to know her many amiable qualities only through the medium of friends, and of those individuals who held them in grateful remembrance.

At the time of this event I was with my grandmother, at one of her beautiful estates in the country; and it was with difficulty even, when I was four years old, that she could be induced to part with me, in order to resign me over into less indulgent hands for the purposes of education. At about this age, however, the grand-chancellor, my father's eldest brother, snatched me from the fond partiality of this good grandmother, to share in the education of his only daughter, afterwards Countess Strogonoff. We had the same apartments, the same masters, the same dresses; all external circumstances conspired to make us perfectly alike; yet, in every period of our lives, and in every act of them, never were two beings more dissimilar: a hint, by the way, to those theorists who generalize systems of education, and methodically prescribe

rules on a subject so important, yet so little understood, and, from its extensive and diversified bearings, so difficult to be comprehended in any general scheme.

I need not speak much of my father's family. Its antiquity, and the many brilliant services of my ancestors, render the name of Worontzow as illustrious as one more alive than I am to the pride of birth could possibly desire. Count Robert, my father, second brother to the chancellor, was young when my mother died, and a man of pleasure. He was consequently not much occupied with the care of his children, but as willingly transferred me over to my uncle as that kind relation, both from gratitude to my mother and affection for him, was glad to receive me.

My two sisters, the eldest, Countess Maria, afterwards Countess Bouterlin, and the second, Countess Elizabeth, afterwards Madame Paliansky, were very early distinguished by the favour of the empress, and even whilst children were appointed maids of honour, and lived at court. Count Alexander, my eldest brother, was the only one of his children who lived with my father, and was the only one whom I knew from my infancy; we had frequent opportunities of seeing each other, and thus an early attachment was created between us, which grew into a mutual confidence and friendship, unabated to this day. My younger brother, Count Simon, lived in the country with my grandfather, and I seldom saw

him, even on his return to town. My sisters, too, if possible, I saw less frequently. I mention these particulars as circumstances which in some respects influenced my future character.

My uncle spared nothing to give his daughter and myself the best masters; and, according to the opinion of the times, we had the best of educations. We were instructed in four different languages, and French we spoke fluently; a councillor of state taught us Italian, and M. Bechtieff gave us lessons in Russ whenever we would condescend to receive them. In dancing we made great proficiency, and we had some notion of drawing.

With pretensions such as these, and an easy exterior of fashion, who could then imagine our education incomplete? But what had been done to mould the disposition, or to inform the understanding, of either one or the other? Absolutely nothing. My uncle had not time, my aunt had neither ability nor inclination.

There was a good deal of pride in my nature, mingled, I know not how, with an uncommon degree of tenderness and sensibility, which made it my most ardent desire to be loved by all those who surrounded me, with the same affection I was ready to bestow upon them. These feelings became so predominant by the time I attained the age of thirteen, that while I longed to gain an interest in the affections of those to whom my youthful and enthusiastic mind fondly attached itself, I fancied that I

could find neither sympathy nor affection in return, and thus became disappointed, and thought myself an isolated being.

In such a peculiar state of mind, a friendly fit of illness became very subservient to my education, as far, at least, as the improvement of my understanding went. I allude to the measles, which I caught about this time; and as a ukase was then in force, prohibiting any intercourse between the court and families affected with cutaneous disorders, like the measles or small-pox, for fear of their being communicated to the Grand Duke Paul, no sooner were the first symptoms apparent on me, than I was sent off into the country, seventeen versts from Petersburg.

During this temporary banishment I was placed under the care of a German lady, and the wife of a Russian major, persons alike unattractive and destitute of every quality which could engage my youthful affections. With companions so uninteresting I had no sort of sympathy; and as the complaint under the effects of which I for some time suffered, by weakening my eyes, had deprived me of the power of reading, I was with it deprived also of every resource and consolation. My former gaiety and playfulness of nature gave way to a profound melancholy, and gloomy reflections on all the circumstances in which I was placed. I became serious and abstracted, seldom speaking, and never

without some deliberate purpose of gaining information.

As soon as I was able to read, I devoted myself to books with the utmost ardour. Bayle, Montesquieu, Boileau, and Voltaire, were among my most favourite authors; and as I began to experience that the time which is spent alone is not always the heaviest, that same sensibility which had hitherto sought approbation only in the applause of others led me to look into myself, and to cultivate those resources of the mind which can alone render one superior to circumstances. Before I returned to Petersburg, my brother, Alexander, had set off for Paris; I found myself, therefore, deprived of his affectionate attentions, to which the indifference of most others around me formed a very painful contrast. Tranquil, however, and contented among my books, amused or affected when occupied with music, I felt unhappy only when absent from my apartment. The late hours I kept, reading sometimes the whole night long, together with the disposition of mind which occasioned this restlessness, gave rise to so much languor and appearance of ill health as to alarm the fears of my respectable uncle, and even to excite the interest of the Empress Elizabeth. By her majesty's direction, I had several visits from her first physician, Bourghave, who, having considered my case with great care, pronounced my constitution to be as yet unimpaired,

and that the symptoms which occasioned the alarm of my friends arose from some uneasiness of the mind rather than from any bodily disorder. In consequence of this opinion, though exposed to a thousand inquiries, I could not be led to the avowal of the truth, which I could scarcely indeed explain myself, and which, even if understood, would rather have excited reproach than interest or sympathy. If I had sketched the picture of my own mind, I must also have described those traces of pride and sensibility which, failing to realize the romantic visions of my fancy, had inspired the presumptuous determination of looking for happiness only within myself. I was resolved, therefore, to conceal those feelings which were predominant over every other, and whilst I attributed to weak nerves and head-aches my pale and languid appearance, my mind was gaining strength and vigour daily by its continued exertions. In the following year, as I was a second time reading over Helvetius "On the Understanding," I was struck with an idea, which I am induced to cite, because it has been sanctioned by my riper judgment—that unless his work were followed by a second volume, with a theory more adapted to received opinions, and the existing order of things, the principles it held forth would have no better effects than to disturb the harmony, and perhaps to dissolve the ties, which connect the several parts of civilized society.

Politics is a subject which has peculiarly inte-

rested me even from my earliest years.* All the strangers, artists, and men of letters, as well as the foreign ministers, who resorted to my uncle's house, were tormented by my insatiable curiosity. I questioned them respecting their several countries,

* The princess told me, that when a child she had sometimes permission from her indulgent uncle to look over old papers relative to negotiations and treaties, and that doing so was her highest gratification. Among these were many curious and interesting documents, but two especially remained on her memory, as singularly calculated to strike the imagination of a child, and even to excite the reflection of those much older. One was a letter from a Schah of Persia to Catherine the First, on her accession to the throne. After the first introductory compliments, it proceeded nearly in these words:—"I hope, my well-beloved sister, that God has not made thee love strong liquors. I who write to thee have eyes like rubies, a nose like a carbuncle, and cheeks inflamed with burning fire; and owing to this unfortunate propensity, I am forced to waste my days and nights on a bed of misery." The empress's known taste for *eau de vie* renders this letter peculiarly piquant. The other relates the following circumstance, which I give in her own words. The Russian court once sent an embassy to China (I forget in whose reign) to congratulate its monarch on an occasion similar to the one I have just mentioned; but not meeting with a very gracious reception, our countrymen returned home a little indignant at the result of their mission. The Russian government, however, deeming it bad policy to acknowledge any such disrespect, despatched other persons with a message of thanks for the flattering reception of their embassy, and with overtures also for a treaty of commerce. This was the Chinese emperor's reply: "You are very ridiculous to pride yourselves so prodigiously on our reception of your people. Have you then never heard, that when we ride on horseback in our streets we do not prevent even the commonest beggar from looking at us?"—Ed.

their forms of government and laws; and the comparisons to which their answers often led inspired me with an ardent desire to travel. At this time, indeed, I neither possessed the courage, nor did I think I ever should possess it, for such an undertaking; but with gloomy presages of sorrow and disappointment, the too frequent attendants on excessive sensibility, I thought myself already all that I ever should be, and shrunk from contemplating evils which I imagined myself unable to encounter. M. Shouvaloff, favourite of the Empress Elizabeth, who wished to be esteemed the Mæcenas of the day, having learned from many of my uncle's literary visitors, whom he was paying court to for the advancement of his own reputation, that I was passionately fond of reading, offered to furnish me with all the literary novelties which he regularly imported from France. This was a resource to me of infinite satisfaction, especially the next year, when, after my marriage, I resided at Moscow, as the public libraries contained little more than such books as I had already read, and some of which I possessed in my own little library of about nine hundred volumes, to the collection of which all my pocket-money had been exclusively devoted. The Encyclopædia and Moreri's Dictionary were this year added to it; and never did the most beautiful and costly trinkets give me half the pleasure I experienced in this acquisition. The attachment I felt for my brother, Count Alexander, made me,

during his absence abroad, a very regular correspondent. I sent him twice a month all the news I heard of the court, of the town, and of the armies; and whether my style of writing has since been good or bad, its character was certainly formed from the sort of journal I then kept for a beloved brother.

During the months of July and August of the year 1759, of which I am now speaking, whilst my uncle, as well as my aunt and cousin, were on a visit with the empress at Czarskosèlo, I remained in town alone, in consequence of some slight indisposition, added to my prevailing taste for study and retirement. With the exception of the Italian Opera, which I once or twice attended, I never went into public; and the only houses at which I visited were, that of Princess Galitzin, where I was a great favourite, both with her and her husband, a very respectable and intelligent old man, and that of Madame Samarin, who was wife to a gentleman of my uncle's household. One evening, having called upon the latter lady, who was unwell, I consented to stay to supper, and accordingly dismissed my carriage, with directions that it should return at eleven o'clock, and bring my femme-de-chambre to accompany me home. It was a delightful summer's evening when the carriage arrived; and as the street was quiet and unfrequented where Madame de Samarin lived, her sister proposed accompanying me to the end of it on foot, which I willingly

agreed to, and directed the coachman to go on before and wait for us there. We had not advanced many steps before a tall figure, issuing from another street, approached us, which my fancy, through the imperfect light, magnified into something gigantic. With an involuntary start of surprise, I inquired of my companion who it could be, and then, for the first time in my life, heard the name of Prince Daschkaw. He was well acquainted, it seemed, with the family of Samarin; and, entering into conversation, he continued to attend us, occasionally addressing himself to me, but in a tone of timid politeness which greatly prepossessed me in his favour. I have since had pleasure in attributing this singular meeting, and the more than favourable impression which was then mutually conceived, to a particular interposition of Providence, which must have destined us for each other. An acquaintance, brought about in the ordinary manner, was next to impossible; and had it been otherwise, or even had his name been ever mentioned in my uncle's house, an affair in which he had been unhappily implicated must have come to my knowledge, forming an effectual barrier against our alliance. Under such circumstances, ignorance became our mutual friend, and permitted the growth of those first favourable impressions which led to an irrevocable interchange of heart and affection. The prince soon felt that his happiness depended on our union, and, as soon as he had

obtained my permission, he requested Prince Galitzin to intercede for him with my uncle and my father, begging at the same time that his hopes might be kept secret until he had visited his mother at Moscow, and obtained her consent and benediction. No opposition was offered on the part of my family; and the princess, his mother, having often urged him, and hitherto in vain, to marry, when made acquainted with his wishes, although he had lately rejected a lady of her choice, cordially approved of his own, and gave a full consent to our marriage.

One evening, before the prince's departure for Moscow to pay this visit of duty to his mother, the Empress Elizabeth came to sup at our house after the Italian Opera, at which she had been attended only by my uncle and M. Shouvaloff. Her intention having been signified beforehand, I remained at home to receive her, and Prince Daschkaw was with me. The attention her majesty shewed us both was marked, and full of kindness; and in the course of the evening, after calling us into another room, she told us, with all the affectionate interest of a good godmother, that she was acquainted with our secret, and wished us every possible happiness. She spoke with great commendation of the prince's dutiful respect towards his mother, and told him, as she led us back to the company, that Field-Marshal Count Bouterlin had received her orders to grant him leave of absence

for the journey. The tone of kindness and maternal tenderness in which her majesty expressed herself, and the interest she deigned to shew in our behalf, affected me to such a degree that I could not conceal my emotion. The empress, on observing it, tapped me gently on the shoulder, and, kissing my cheek, "Compose yourself, my dear child," said she, "otherwise all your friends will think I have been scolding you." Never can I possibly forget this scene, which established for ever my attachment to this gracious and kind-hearted sovereign.

During this winter, also, the grand duke, afterwards named Peter the Third, and the grand duchess, afterwards named with so much propriety Catherine the Great, came to sup and spend an evening at my uncle's house. I had already been represented to her imperial highness, by many of my uncle's visitors, as a young person who spent almost her whole time in study, and was otherwise spoken of in such favourable terms as their partiality suggested. The esteem with which she afterwards honoured me resulted from a prepossession of this nature, and inspired an enthusiasm and devotedness in return, which carried me into a sphere of action I then so little contemplated or aspired to, and more or less influenced the rest of my life. At the time of which I am speaking, I may venture to assert there were not two women in the empire, except the grand duchess and myself, who occupied themselves at all in serious reading; hence was a

point of mutual attraction; and as the graces of her manner were absolutely irresistible to all whom she chose to please, what must have been their effect on a young creature like myself, scarcely fifteen years of age, and so susceptible of their power?

Throughout this memorable evening, the grand duchess addressed herself almost exclusively to me, and enchanted me by her conversation. The elevation of sentiment, and the information she displayed, seemed to point out a being privileged by nature above all others, and even such as my most exalted ideas of perfection had hitherto fallen short of. The evening passed rapidly away, but the impression it left was indelible, and easy to be traced in many of the actions I shall hereafter relate.

On the prince's return from Moscow, he lost not a moment in presenting himself to all my family; but, owing to a serious illness, which alarmed us for my aunt's life, our marriage was deferred until the month of February. A relapse of her disorder having then come on, it was solemnized with the utmost privacy; and as soon as all apprehensions on her account had ceased, we set off for Moscow.

Here a new world opened upon me; new engagements and new circumstances. I spoke Russ very imperfectly, and to add to my other embarrassments, my mother-in-law spoke no other language. The members of my husband's family were for the most part elderly people; and though I experienced from them much indulgence on account of their love for

the prince, and their satisfaction at his marriage, yet I could not help perceiving that, had I been more a Muscovite, I should have pleased them better. I resolved, therefore, to apply myself with diligence to my native language, and had the satisfaction of making such progress as gained the applause and approbation of these my respectable relations, for whom I continued to feel a tender and respectful regard, which gained their friendship in return, even after the connexion between us had long ceased to subsist.

CHAPTER II.

Birth of a daughter—Declining health of the Empress Elizabeth—The prince summoned to St. Petersburg—Fit of illness—Return of the prince—Affecting scene—Birth of a son—Singular conjugal correspondence—Journey to St. Petersburg—Visit to the grand duke and grand duchess—Anecdote of the grand duke—His undignified tastes and habits—His favourite companions—Contrast with the grand duchess—Her growing intimacy with the princess—Court anecdotes and occurrences—Approaching death of the Empress—Extraordinary interview and conversation with the grand duchess—Self-devotion of the princess.

On the 21st of February, the year after our marriage, my daughter was born; and in the month of May, we accompanied my mother-in-law to her estate of Troitskoe. Books and music had lost none of their charms, and with these resources time passed swiftly away. In July, Prince Daschkaw and I made an excursion to his estate at Orell, and thence returned to Moscow; when, his leave of absence drawing to an end, we wrote to my father, who was at Petersburg, begging him to exert his interest in having it prolonged.

The Empress Elizabeth growing old and feeble, the courtiers were beginning to direct their attentions towards her successor. This of late had given the grand duke a more absolute control than formerly over the regiment of Preobraginsky guards, which he commanded, and in which Prince Daschkaw was a second captain. An application was therefore necessarily made to his imperial highness, for an extension of his leave to five months longer, which the prince's anxiety to remain until after my second confinement induced him to solicit. The grand duke requested, before he granted this favour, to see him at Petersburg, under some idea perhaps of paying him a particular compliment, for as such my father considered it, and in consequence urged his speedy departure. I was inconsolable at the idea of this separation, and so overwhelmed with sorrow whilst anticipating his absence, that I ceased to enjoy my accustomed happiness even in his society. My health began to suffer, and on the 8th of January, the day on which the prince quitted Moscow, a fever came on, attended with delirium. As this arose from agitation of mind alone, I attributed my speedy recovery to the obstinacy with which I refused all medical advice. At the end of a few days, no worse effects remained than excessive languor. I frequently shed tears, and I would unceasingly have written to the prince, were it only to communicate tidings of my melancholy, but that his youngest sister's affectionate attention to

my health did not permit my sacrificing it to so dangerous an indulgence.

In describing what I felt and suffered it must not be forgotten that I was not quite seventeen years of age, and separated for the first time from a husband whom I passionately loved.

As to the prince, every attention was paid by their imperial highnesses which could render his stay at Petersburg agreeable. He was frequently engaged in their traineau parties to Oranienbaum; but unluckily a too great exposure to the cold in these excursions brought on a serious attack of quinsy, which in its consequences might have been fatal to us both. At the time fixed on for his return to Moscow, although suffering under this disorder, unwilling to disappoint the anxious expectations of his mother and myself, he left Petersburg, and, travelling day and night, never quitted his carriage until he arrived at Moscow. On reaching the barriers of the city, the inflammation in his throat had so much increased that, apprehensive of the terror it might occasion were he to appear before us, unable as he then was to articulate a word, he signified his wish as intelligibly as he could to be driven to the house of Madame Novasiltskoff, his aunt, in hopes of applying some temporary remedy which might help to restore his voice, and render his general appearance less alarming. His aunt, when she saw the state he was in, insisted on his going immediately to bed; and having sent for a

physician, who pronounced it improper that he should then be removed, she detained his post horses, in order that the next morning, in case he was sufficiently recovered, he might arrive at his mother's door, as if nothing had occurred.

During this interval, a scene took place which even at this moment I shudder to think of.

My mother-in-law, and her sister the Princess Gagarin, who had attended me at the birth of my daughter, were this very evening assembled in my apartment with the midwife, in hourly expectation of rendering a similar service; when my femme-de-chamber, a giddy girl about my own age, took the opportunity of my leaving the room for a moment, abruptly to tell me that Prince Daschkaw was in Moscow. I uttered a cry, which luckily was not heard in the next room, whilst this inconsiderate creature continued to relate that he had arrived at his aunt's, and had given strict orders that it should be kept a profound secret.

To form any conception of my agony at this moment, let it be remembered what I then was, such as I have already described myself, with no idea of happiness inseparable from the beloved object of my affection, and with feelings naturally ardent and impetuous, quickly taking alarm, and not easily controlled. I made, however, every possible exertion to recover myself; and with the most composed air I could assume, on returning to the princess, I persuaded her that the period of my confinement must

be a little more distant than we imagined, and therefore entreated her as well as my aunt to retire to their apartments and take some repose, I solemnly promised to have them called should any necessity occur.

The instant they were gone, I flew to the midwife, and bade her, for the love of heaven, to follow me. I think I see her bloodshot eyes expand even at this moment, so wide did she open them upon me. The good woman supposed I had taken leave of my senses, and began an expostulation in her Silesian patois, which I thought would never have ended: "No; could she answer to God Almighty for the murder of innocents?" Again and again I interrupted her; at length, almost in despair at her refusal, I confessed my secret, declaring that unless I saw the prince with my own eyes, I never could survive my apprehensions of some serious accident having befallen him; and unless she would have the charity to accompany me to my aunt's, I protested no power should prevent me from going alone. Fright made her relent at last; but when I told her we must walk, to avoid the noise of the traineau and horses under the princess's windows, I thought her feet would have struck root into the spot on which she stood, whilst again I had to overcome her scruples, by representing the danger of a discovery if we went otherwise, and the consequences of the terror it would occasion. At length she yielded to my entreaties, and with the aid of an old man, who

lived in the family and chaunted prayers to my mother-in-law, attempted to assist me down stairs; but scarcely had we descended half a dozen steps, when I found my pains return with such violence that my two companions, thinking there was no time to spare for entreaties, used every possible means to force me back. It was now my turn to be inexorable; I clung stubbornly to the banisters, and neither force nor threats could move me.

At length with difficulty we descended the staircase, and after frequent returns of pain, more and more alarming as we traversed two streets, we reached my aunt's door.

Heaven knows how this was accomplished, and how I scrambled up a high flight of steps which led to my husband's apartment. All I can tell is, that, on entering, I saw him pale and extended on his bed. I caught but a momentary glimpse, and fell lifeless on the floor, and in this state was conveyed home in a litter by some of my aunt's servants, and re-established in my own apartment, without exciting any suspicion that I had been for an instant absent. The violence of my pains alone brought me to life. It was then eleven o'clock; I sent for my mother-in-law and my aunt, and in an hour afterwards my son Michael was born. My first impulse was to apprise the prince of my safety, and without being perceived I whispered my femme-de-chambre to despatch the good old man to his chamber with these joyous tidings.

I have often shuddered at the recollection of this evening, and the scene which Prince Daschkaw afterwards described. He believed it one of the feverish illusions of his brain, when I appeared at first like a vision before his eyes, with my attendant sprites, the frowning nurse and hobbling old man; but in a moment, the fearful reality was too evident to his senses, when he beheld me lying, as if lifeless, on the floor. Distracted at perceiving my danger, and enraged at all the house for having betrayed his secret, he jumped out of bed, and would have followed me home, had not his aunt, alarmed by the confusion in her house, suddenly appeared, and with tears and entreaties conjured him to shew some regard for his own life as well as mine, by hearkening and submitting to her advice. The prince's anguish during the interval between my appearance and the old man's arrival, was as excessive as the extravagance of his joy when he heard my safety announced. Starting up from the foot of his bed, where he had before thrown himself, he caught the good old man in his arms, and hugged him with transport, weeping and dancing by turns; he gave him a purse of gold, and begged that a priest might be sent for to chaunt a solemn thanksgiving, at which he would fain himself have assisted, for nothing could persuade him that he was also an invalid; in short, the house was in an uproar of joy the whole night. All was perfectly quiet with us until six o'clock in the morning, the princess's

usual hour of attending mass, when Prince Daschkaw ordered the post horses to his carriage, and drove up to the door. His mother unfortunately was not gone out, but hearing his carriage draw up, flew to receive him on the staircase. His pale face and muffled throat at once announced his situation, and had he not caught her in his arms, another tragic scene would have inevitably followed. The adoration in which he was held by his mother and by his wife, to say the truth, was such as to become quite a source of domestic misfortune; at least on the present occasions it must be allowed to have proved so. In the confusion of the moment, he carried his mother into my apartment instead of her own, so that our delight was a little restrained at what appeared to her our first interview. The moment her alarm had subsided, she ordered a bed for her son in his dressing room adjoining my chamber; and with a prudent precaution lest his disorder should be infectious, she absolutely prohibited any intercourse between us. This separation, though in many respects proper, I could not but regret, as I longed to be his nurse myself, and at least to have the testimony every minute of my own eyes that his amendment was progressive. Affection, however, always inventive, suggested a means of communication. There was scarcely a moment that could be snatched from the observation of our friends which was spent in any other way than in writing little notes to each other, elo-

quent in the spirit of tenderness, which wiser and cooler heads might look down upon as childish folly, though I should sincerely pity the heartlessness of such observers.

Forty long years of sorrow for his loss have since passed away; yet, as I have had the misfortune to outlive a husband whom I adored, I would not, for more than worlds could give me, relinquish the remembrance of any circumstance, however trifling, which shed one ray of pleasure on his short but inestimable life. The Mercury we employed in our correspondence was an old woman whose office it was to sit up with me at night; and often did she creep from one room to another, whilst her more than half shut eyes made her almost guiltless of the transgression. At the end of three days, however, our Mercury, out of pity perhaps for my eyes, turned informer, and betrayed our secret to my mother-in-law, who lectured us both for our imprudence, and playfully threatened to steal away our pens and ink. Happily, a favourable crisis in my husband's disorder soon taking place, his amendment advanced rapidly, and he was allowed to sit by my bed-side whilst the progress of my recovery was very tedious. We did not return into the country,—as it was our intention in a short time to set off for Petersburg. The day was often fixed for our departure, and as often postponed by the prince, in compliance with the fond request of his mother. At length we commenced our journey,

and arrived at Petersburg on the 28th of June, a day, twelve months afterwards, so memorable and glorious to my country.

This journey was to me a circumstance of great delight. I wished again to see my relations, whose manners and habits of life were so different from what I had been accustomed to at Moscow, and so much more conformable with my own taste and inclinations. My uncle's house, in particular, I longed to revisit, where I had learnt to admire the polished and liberal refinement of its society, as well as the European taste in its furniture and decorations, which justly entitled it to the name of a princely residence. As we drove into town, each returning object excited new pleasure in my heart. Petersburg never appeared to my eyes so beautiful, so smiling, so magnificent. Everything was animated by the vivacity of my own thoughts, whilst instinctively I let down the carriage-windows, hoping to see a friend or relation in every one who passed; and even greeting the commonest objects with the welcome of old acquaintance. My spirits were agitated almost into a fever before we drove to our own door; and the moment I had arranged a room there for my daughter next to mine, I flew to my father's and my uncle's houses, totally forgetting they were then at their country seats.

The next day my father came to see us, and communicated an order lately received from court, that those officers of the Preobraginsky guards who had

been invited to Oranienbaum by the grand duke and grand duchess should repair thither, along with their wives, and that we were of the party named. This was to me a most unwelcome piece of news, having already conceived a disgust at the restraints of a court life, and feeling at this moment the greatest reluctance to the idea of separation from my daughter. My father, however, having kindly offered us his house, situated between Petersburg and Oranienbaum, we gladly established ourselves there; and the day after our arrival, went to pay our court to their imperial highnesses. The grand duke, as soon as we were presented, thus, I remember, addressed himself to me:—"Though you are determined, I find, not to live in this palace, I hope to see you every day, and I expect you to spend more of your time with me than in the grand duchess's company." I said nothing worth noticing in reply; but I felt very little inclination to repeat my visit oftener than was necessary to keep up appearances, and to avoid giving offence. Some sacrifice in this respect was indispensable, in order to secure the present favourable opportunity of enjoying the grand duchess's society, and of cultivating her friendship and esteem, of which I daily received new and distinguished proofs. The various and frequent pretexts, however, which I was obliged to use in escaping the parties of her imperial spouse, and the decided preference I had shewn, were not unobserved,—as he gave me to understand, when, taking me aside one

day, he astonished me with a remark very characteristic of the simplicity of his head and of the goodness of his heart, but which, by the bye, was expressed with so much more point than was found in the usual tenour of his conversation, that I never ceased to wonder, until I chanced to discover the person who had adroitly inserted it into his brain for the occasion. "My child," said he, "you would do well to recollect that it is much safer to deal with honest blockheads, like your sister and myself, than with great wits, who squeeze the juice out of the orange, and then throw away the rind." I affected neither to understand the import nor the application of his words, and merely reminded him, in reply, how distinctly his aunt, the empress, had signified her wishes that we should pay no less attention to the grand duchess than to his imperial highness. Here I must take an opportunity of rendering justice to my sister the Countess Elizabeth, who sufficiently understood our difference of character never to expect those attentions from me which her situation procured her from the rest of the court. It was impossible, as I have observed, always to avoid the grand duke's entertainments. They were sometimes held in a sort of camp, where smoking with his Holstein generals was the grand duke's favourite amusement. These officers had been for the most part corporals and sergeants in the Prussian service, the truant sons of German shoemakers, and such as had risen from the very dregs of the people; a set

of *ragamuffin* generals, not unworthy the selection of such a superior. The evenings ended with a ball and supper, given in a saloon hung with branches of fir, and called by a German name suitable to the taste of its decorations, and the sort of phraseology most in fashion with the company, which was so mixed up with German terms that some knowledge of that language was absolutely necessary to every one who would not become a laughing-stock to this august society.

At other times the grand duke held his festivities at a small country house, a little distance from Oranienbaum, which, from its size, would not admit a very numerous party; and here punch and tea, mingled with the fumes of tobacco and the ridiculous game of *campis*, helped to diversify the dull monotony of the evening. What a striking contrast to the wit, taste, good sense, and propriety, which characterized the grand duchess's parties! Attractions such as I there met with could not fail to establish the predilection I had formed; and if I observed with delight her increasing esteem for us, I also perceived there were no persons more sincerely devoted to her interest than Prince Daschkaw and myself.

The empress resided at the palace of Peterhoff, where once a week the Grand Duchess had permission to see her son the Grand Duke Paul. On her return from these visits she usually stopped at our house, and begged me to accompany her home to spend the rest of the evening. I received little

notes from her when anything prevented our frequent meetings; and thus arose an intimate and confidential correspondence which was continued after her removal from the country, and which, in the loss of her society, still strengthened and animated a devoted attachment which knew no other bounds than the love I bore towards my husband and children.

During one of the entertainments given by the grand duke at the palace, at which the grand duchess made one of eighty persons who sat down to table, the conversation happening to turn on a M. Tschelischtscoff, an ensign in the guards, suspected to be a favoured lover of the Countess Hendrikoff, her majesty's niece, the grand duke, who was exceedingly elated with wine, swore out, in the true spirit of a Prussian corporal, that he ought to have his head cut off as a warning to his brother officers, for daring to make love to a relation of his sovereign. Whilst all his Holstein sycophants, by nods and signs, evinced profound admiration of their master's wisdom, I could not help answering his imperial highness, that cutting off a head appeared rather tyrannical; for even were the crime in question proved, so frightful a punishment was highly disproportionate to the offence. "You are a mere child," was his reply, "and what you say is a proof of it; otherwise you would know, that to be sparing of the punishment of death is to encourage insubordination and every kind of disorder."

"But, sir," said I, "your imperial highness is speaking on a subject, and in a strain, inexpressibly alarming to the present company; for, with the exception of those very respectable generals, almost all who have now the honour of sitting in your presence have lived only during a reign in which such a punishment has never yet been heard of." "As to that," returned the grand duke, "it signifies nothing, or rather it is the very cause of the present want of discipline and order; but take my word for it, you are a mere child, and know nothing about the matter." Everybody else was silent; and the conversation, if such it may be called, rested between ourselves. "I am very ready to acknowledge, sir," said I, "that I am quite at a loss to comprehend your reasoning; but one thing of which I am very sensible is, that your august aunt still lives, and fills the throne." The eyes of all the company were immediately turned on me; and the grand duke, I was happy to find, made no answer, but only lolled out his tongue, as he was accustomed to do for his diversion at the priests in church, which shewed he was not out of humour, and prevented my being provoked to other replies. As there were several officers of the guards and of the corps of cadets, of which the grand duke had the ostensible direction, among the company present, this conversation flew like lightning next day about Petersburg, and gained me a high degree of notoriety, to which my extreme ignorance of the world

and of courts attached but little value. The flattering manner in which the grand duchess spoke of it delighted me, in common with everything else which expressed her approbation and preference; but I had not at that time learnt the danger of speaking truth to sovereigns; a transgression which they, perhaps, themselves may pardon, but this I am very sure of, that their courtiers never can. It is to this little occurrence, however, and to some similar indications of fearless sincerity, which gained me a reputation for public spiritedness and firmness of character, that I attribute the alacrity and even enthusiasm with which Prince Daschkaw's friends and brother officers in the guards so soon afterwards gave me their entire confidence.

The empress's state of health, which had long been declining, gave but little hope, as the ensuing winter approached, that she would have strength to survive it. I shared the grief which most of my family, and especially the grand chancellor, felt on this occasion; not only because I loved her majesty, but because, from the scenes I had so lately witnessed at Oranienbaum, I saw how little my country had to hope from the grand duke her successor, sunk as he was in the most degrading ignorance, careless of the happiness of his country, and swayed by no better principle than a vulgar pride in being the creature of the King of Prussia, whom he used to designate amongst his Holstein comrades by the title of "*the King my Master.*"

It was announced, about the middle of December, that the empress could not live many days. At that time I happened to be much indisposed, and had even been confined to my bed; but, regardless of any danger excepting such as might affect the grand duchess when the reigning sovereign was no more, I got up on the 20th of the month at midnight, and having wrapped myself in furs, we drove towards the wooden palace on the Moika, where her majesty and the rest of the imperial family were then resident. Alighting from my carriage at some distance from the palace, I walked to a little back vestibule in that wing of it which was occupied by their imperial highnesses, in hopes of reaching unperceived the grand duchess's apartments. By a most fortunate accident, which saved me perhaps from some disastrous mistake, as I knew nothing of this part of the palace, I met the grand duchess's first femme-de-chambre, Katherine Ivanovna. Having made myself known, I begged to be immediately conducted to her imperial highness. "She is in bed," was the reply. "It matters not," said I, "the business which brings me is urgent, and I must speak with her to-night" The femme-de-chambre, who knew me well, and my attachment to her mistress, notwithstanding the unseasonableness of the hour, made no further hesitation, but led the way to her apartment. The grand duchess, knowing that I was ill, and therefore not likely to expose myself to the cold of such

a rigorous night, and the difficulties of gaining admittance into the palace, could scarcely believe her senses when she heard me announced. " For Heaven's sake," exclaimed she, " if she is really here, let her be instantly admitted." I found her, as I entered, in bed; but before I could utter a word, " My dearest princess," said she, " before you tell me what brings you out at such an extraordinary hour, endeavour to warm yourself; you are, indeed, too negligent of your health, which is so precious to Prince Daschkaw and myself." She then bade me get into the bed, and having well muffled up my feet, she at length allowed me to speak. " In the present state of things, madam," said I, " when the empress has but a few days, perhaps a very few hours, to live, I can no longer endure the idea of that uncertainty in which an approaching event may involve your welfare. Is it not possible to make some provision against the impending danger, and to avert those clouds which are ready to burst over your head? In the name of Heaven, place your confidence in me; I am worthy of it, and will prove myself more so. Have you formed any plan, or taken any precautions which may ensure your safety? Deign to give me your orders, and to direct me."

The grand duchess, bathed in tears, pressed my hand against her heart. " I am grateful to you, my dearest princess," replied she, " beyond all

power of expression; and it is with the most perfect confidence and truth that I declare to you I have formed no sort of plan—that I can attempt nothing, and that I believe it only remains for me to meet with courage whatever may happen. I therefore commit myself to God Almighty, and place my only hope in his protection." "Then, madam," said I, "your friends must act for you. As to myself, I have zeal enough to inflame them all; and what is the sacrifice I am not ready to make?" "In the name of Heaven, princess," said she, "think not of exposing yourself to danger, in hopes of counteracting evils which are, in truth, without a remedy. Were you on my account to draw on yourself misfortunes, that indeed would subject me to everlasting regrets." "All that I can say at present, madam," replied I, "is, that I will take no step which can endanger your safety; be the peril what it may, let it light on me. Though a blind devotion in your cause lead me to the scaffold, you shall never be its victim." The grand duchess would have continued, and was warning me against the inexperience and enthusiasm of my age and character, when, interrupting her, I kissed her hand, and assured her that I would no longer expose either of us to any risk by prolonging this interview. She then cordially embraced me, and after remaining some moments in each other's arms, mutually affected, I rose from the bed, and, leaving her much

agitated by what had passed, I hastened, with all the courage and strength I had, to retrace the way back to my carriage.

On my return home, I found the prince, who had only just arrived before me, in the utmost amazement, as may well be conceived, at the absence of his invalid; but when I told him where I had been, and the motive of such a visit; when I repeated the resolution I had seriously taken, of contributing to my country's good by saving the grand duchess, he approved and applauded the energy and devotedness I had shewn, in terms of the warmest praise, qualified only with those of tender solicitude lest my health on this occasion should be the sacrifice. He had been that evening at my father's house; and when he related to me part of a conversation they had held together, which, however guardedly my father spoke, sufficiently shewed his sentiments and forebodings on the approaching change to be such as alarmed every patriotic bosom, my satisfaction on this point was complete, and I thought no more of the uneasiness, the fatigue, and danger, I had just undergone.

CHAPTER III.

Death of the Empress Elizabeth—Feeling of the soldiery on the occasion—Invitation from the new emperor to the princess—Extraordinary conversation with the emperor—He intimates his intention of raising the princess's sister to the throne—An imperial card-party—Plain speaking to an emperor—A court warrior—Peter the Third in the funeral chamber—The English ambassador, Mr. Keith—Supper at the grand chancellor's—Strange assertions and disclosures of the emperor—The new etiquette—An ill-timed appointment—Court scandal.

On the 25th of December, Christmas-day, the Empress Elizabeth breathed her last; and such was the sensation throughout Petersburg which this event produced, that, notwithstanding the usual festivity of the day, an expression of grief and apprehension was seen in every countenance. Some writers would have it believed that the guards were actuated by very different feelings, who are described as hastening with joy to the palace, to take the oath of allegiance to their new master. Two regiments of guards, the Semenoffsky and Ismaeloffsky, passed under my windows; and from the

evidence of my own senses I can attest what almost every inhabitant of the city would also have declared, that there was no show of either alacrity or satisfaction in any of their movements. The air of the soldiers as they passed was, on the contrary, gloomy and dejected; a confused, stifled murmur ran through the ranks: had I been unacquainted with the cause, I should have required no other testimony to assure me that the empress was no more.

I still kept my chamber, much indisposed, and my uncle, the grand chancellor, was ill in bed, when, on the third day after his accession, the emperor, to my uncle's great surprise, paid him a visit; and very much to mine also, sent a page to desire my company at the palace in the evening. My state of health served for an excuse, as also for the following evening, when the invitation was repeated. Two or three days afterwards, my sister wrote me word that the emperor was not at all pleased at my refusals, and that he did not believe a word of the excuse I had assigned. To avoid explanations, therefore, and remarks which might be in their effects unpleasant to the prince my husband, I at length complied; and after visiting my father and my uncle, I drove to the palace. The empress, of whom I heard only through her valet-de-chambre, was, I knew, not visible to any one. Full of grief and apprehension, she had never left her apartments, except to direct and to see that all due respect was paid to the body of the deceased sovereign.

The emperor, as soon as I had appeared in his presence, began to address me on a subject which seemed very near his heart, and in a manner which confirmed all my suspicions and alarm on account of the empress. He spoke in a low voice and in half sentences, but in terms unequivocally expressive of his intentions to displace *her*, as he indicated the empress, and to raise *Romanovna*, as he said, when speaking of my sister, to the throne. Having thus declared himself, he proceeded to give me some salutary cautions. "If, my little friend," said he, "you will take my advice, pay a little more attention to *us;* the time may come when you will have good reason to repent of any negligence shewn to your sister; believe me, it is for your interest alone I speak; you have no other way of making yourself of any consequence in the world than by studying her disposition, and striving to gain her countenance and protection."

As it was impossible at this moment to make any suitable reply, I affected not to comprehend a word he said, and hastened to join his party at the game of *campis.* In playing at this game, each person has a certain number of lives, and the survivor is the winner. The stake which each put into the pool was ten imperials, a sum much too extravagant for my purse, especially as it appeared that his majesty, when he lost, instead of resigning one of his lives, according to the rules of the game, took an imperial out of his pocket and put it into the pool, by

which dextrous manœuvre he became of course the winner. As soon as the game was finished, his majesty proposed a second, which I distinctly begged to decline. The emperor insisted I should play again, but I as sturdily refused. He then proposed that I should go halves with him. This I also declined; and at length I was provoked to declare, in the tone of a spoiled child (for as such he usually treated me), that I was not rich enough to be cheated; but if his majesty would play like other people, one might then have some chance. The emperor good-naturedly let this sauciness pass, without any other comment than some of his accustomed buffooneries; after which I was allowed to escape. His majesty's card party, on this as well as most other evenings, consisted of the two Narishkins and their wives, M. Ismailoff and his wife, Countess Elizabeth, Messrs. Milgounoff, Goudovitch, and Angern, the emperor's first aide-de-camp, the Countess Bruce, and two or three others whose names I forget. They all stared at me with astonishment, and as I afterwards withdrew from the circle, I heard them exclaim one to another, like the Holstein generals at Oranienbaum, "What a spirit that woman has!"

As I sauntered through the suite of apartments where the rest of the court was assembled, such was the change of dress in every one I saw, that all the world appeared in masquerade. I could not help smiling when I perceived the old Prince Trou-

betskoy, who was at least seventy years of age, suddenly metamorphosed into a military character, and now, for the first time in his life, arrayed in full uniform, braced tight as a drum, booted and spurred, and prepared for desperate combat. This deplorable old courtier, who had the trick of feigning illness and decrepitude like beggar men, had lately, for some private purpose of his own, been laid up in a fit of the gout, with his legs swollen as big as his body; but the moment the new emperor was declared, he jumped up from his bed armed *cap-à-pied*, and instantly ran amongst the Ismaeloffsky guards, of which he had been appointed lieutenant-colonel, molesting every one he met with his orders. This fearful vision was one of the dauntless warriors of the court of Peter!

Whilst mummeries of this nature were passing at the court of the new emperor, the usual solemnities in honour of the departed sovereign were not omitted. The body lay in state for six weeks, attended in turn by all the ladies of rank, and almost daily visited by the empress, who discovered such proofs of unfeigned respect and attachment to the memory of her aunt and benefactress as interested and even won the heart of every beholder. Peter the Third, on the contrary, seldom visited the funeral chamber of his predecessor, and only, as it would appear, to exhibit the emptiness and irreverence of his own character. He was then to be seen whispering and laughing with the ladies in

attendance, ridiculing the priests, and finding fault with the officers and even sentinels on duty, on the important article of dress, the tie of their cravats, the size of their buckles, and the cut of their uniforms.

Among the foreign ministers then resident at Petersburg, as very few enjoyed any consideration at the new court, there was not much feeling of prepossession in favour of the emperor. The only one at all in his good graces, excepting the Prussian, was the English ambassador, Mr. Keith. Prince Daschkaw and I lived on terms of the greatest intimacy with this most respectable old gentleman, who loved and treated me with as much tenderness as if I had really been his daughter, as he often used to call me. At one of our little parties at his house about this time, where there were only ourselves and the Princess Galitzin, I remember Mr. Keith, speaking to us of the emperor, observed, with expressions of regret, that he had begun his reign with a determination of giving his people offence, and he would certainly end it by gaining nothing but their contempt.

His majesty, having one day signified his intention of supping at the grand-chancellor's, a proposal productive of but very little gratification to my uncle, who as yet was scarcely able to rise from his bed, my sister, Countess Bouterlin, Prince Daschkaw, and I, were desired to attend on the occasion. The emperor arrived about seven o'clock,

and continued with my uncle in his chamber until supper was announced, at which he dispensed with my uncle's attendance. My sister, Countess Bouterlin, Countess Stroganoff, and myself, under pretence of doing the honours of the table, continued standing during supper, or rather sauntering about the room, which was much more in the emperor's taste, who was no great friend to ceremony. I happened to find myself behind his majesty's chair during the course of some conversation which he particularly addressed to the Austrian ambassador, Count Merci. He was recounting a story of his having been sent by his father, when at Kiel, in Holstein, on an expedition against the Bohemians, whom he in a moment put to flight with a troop of carabineers and a company of foot. During the relation of this exploit, I perceived the Austrian ambassador several times change colour, apparently at a loss how to understand his majesty, whether as speaking of the wandering Bohemians or gipsies who live by fortune-telling and depredations, or of the Bohemians subjects of the empress queen; and what, perhaps, added to his embarrassment, was his consciousness of an order lately issued from the court of Petersburg, directing a separation to be made between the Russian and Austrian troops; a measure indicating no very pacific intentions towards his sovereign on the part of the emperor. Standing, as I was at this moment, behind his majesty's chair, I leant over, and, in a

half whisper in Russ, humouring his notion of me, which I have described, I begged him not to tell such stories to foreign ministers, for had there been any Bohemian vagabonds at Kiel, his father would certainly have employed the police officers to have turned them out, and not his highness, who was but a child at the period alluded to. "You are a little fool," said his majesty, turning quickly round, "and you delight in wrangling with me." The emperor, I perceived, had drunk freely, and the remark I thus intruded on his story, luckily for me, was thought of no more.

I was, one evening, at an entertainment at the palace, and what was the astonishment of all the company, when his majesty, at the close of a long conversation on his usual topic, the King of Prussia, called aloud upon M. Wolkoff, one of the party, to vouch how often they had laughed together at the constant failure of the secret orders sent by the Empress Elizabeth to her armies in Prussia. This gentleman, who was no other than principal secretary at that time to the supreme council, and, in concert with the grand duke, had regularly counteracted the intended effect of these orders, by transmitting copies of them to the King of Prussia, had feeling enough to be utterly confounded at such an appeal, and was ready to sink from his chair with every word the emperor uttered. His majesty, however, very unconscious of such sensations, seemed to delight in the recollection of what he

had done, and to pride himself on the occasion of performing so friendly an office to the open enemy of his country!

Amongst the late changes introduced at court, the French curtsey was ordered to be substituted in place of the Russian mode of salutation, which is a profound inclination of the head and body. The attempts of the old ladies to unstiffen their knees, in conformity with this innovation, were in general very unhappy, and ludicrous enough; and the emperor had a great source of amusement in witnessing their failure. This was a motive for his pretty regular attendance at the court chapel, or rather for his being present at the conclusion of the service, when he was sure of ample opportunity of indulging his mirth in observing, and with a variety of grimaces mimicking, the gestures of those whose efforts to please him on this point were least successful. Old Countess Bouterlin, my sister's mother-in-law, was of this number, who, on one occasion, I well remember, would have met with a serious fall, had it not been for the good-natured assistance of some persons who stood near.

After the scenes I have already described, it may be easily imagined that the emperor's thoughts were not much directed towards his son, or to any thing which concerned his education. The elder Panin, who was governor of this young prince, frequently expressed a wish that his majesty would witness the progress of his studies, by being present

at one of his customary examinations; but the emperor usually excused himself with a plea wholly unanswerable, "that he understood nothing at all about such matters." At length, however, by the joint entreaties of his two uncles, the Princes of Holstein, he was prevailed on to gratify the governor's wishes, and the grand duke was accordingly summoned into his presence. At the close of the examination, "Between ourselves, gentlemen," said the emperor aloud to his uncles, "I think the little rogue knows these things much better than we do;" and then, as a mark of his approbation for the knowledge he had displayed, his majesty would have immediately dubbed him a corporal in the guards, but for the remonstrances of M. Panin, who gravely represented the probability of such an honour turning his little head, by leading him to imagine he was already a man. The emperor, not perceiving the ridicule which was implied, consented to suspend his intentions with regard to the pupil, but hastened to recompense the governor, by conferring on him the rank of a general of infantry.

To have a perfect sense of the overwhelming effect of such a proposal on M. Panin, one must imagine a pale valetudinarian, much beyond the middle age, studious only of ease, having passed all his life in courts, extremely precise in his dress, wearing a stately wig, with three well-powdered ties dangling upon his back, and altogether giving

one the pasteboard idea of an old courtier in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. The tone of *corporalism*, which was the exclusive taste of Peter the Third, was of all things in nature that which M. Panin most abhorred. When this unexpected dignity was, therefore, next day announced by M. Milgounoff, who was deputed to bear the intelligence, M. Panin quietly declared, that if no other means could be found of escaping an honour of which he was so extremely unworthy, he was resolved on immediately deserting into Sweden. The emperor heard of this refusal with excessive surprise. "I always understood," said his majesty, "that Panin was a man of sense; but never let me hear so again." A compromise was, however, agreed to, and the emperor, determined on some sort of promotion, granted him all the civil distinctions which the rank in question could confer.

I may here speak of the connexion between Prince Daschkaw and the Panins. The two brothers of this name were cousin-germans of my mother-in-law, and, consequently, cousins once removed; or, in other words, according to our mode of expressing this relationship in Russia, uncles of my husband. This sort of family connexion, which, in our country, is scarcely ever lost sight of, but continues to be recognised in the same terms of uncle and nephew through several generations, was strengthened in the present case by the still closer ties of affection and gratitude. The

elder brother, who had been employed ever since I was an infant, on some foreign mission, I happened to be very little acquainted with, until about the period of the revolution; but the intimacy which then subsisted between us, so reasonably to be accounted for on grounds very different from those which my enemies assumed when I once became an object of envy, furnished matter for the tongue of slander, which the passionate love I was known to bear my husband was not enough to silence. This really respectable old uncle was by some people accused of being my lover, and not very unfrequently also by others of being my father; for many who rescued me from the former aspersion did so but to darken the reputation of my mother. Had he not conferred some real benefits on my husband and children, I believe it would have been impossible, after such calumnies, to restrain the aversion which they so naturally excite against the person who is made, however undeservedly, the cause of them. To confess the truth, I had much more pleasure in the society of his brother the general, whose soldier-like frankness and manliness of character perfectly accorded with the sincerity of my own nature; and as long as his first wife lived, whom I loved with the truest affection, I saw a great deal more of him than of the minister. But I have said enough on a subject which it pains me to think of, even at this moment.

CHAPTER IV.

An embarrassing occurrence—Prince Daschkaw appointed to a mission—Unpopular conduct of the emperor—Peace with Prussia—Extraordinary rejoicings on the occasion—Court banquet and outrage of the emperor—Ludicrous squabble between the emperor and one of his uncles—First movements towards a conspiracy — Marshal Razoumoffsky — Discontent of the guards — M. Panin, governor to the grand duke—Prince Repnin—Fête at the summer palace— —New obstacles—The princess exposes her designs to M. Panin—Names to him the parties conspiring with her—M. Oddart—False reports concerning him—The Archbishop of Novorogod favourable to a change—An accident, and its consequences—Extraordinary anecdote of the emperor—Absurd scene after a review—Daily life of Peter the Third.

In the month of January, 1762, a circumstance occurred of a very unpleasant nature, and very important to me in its consequences. One morning, during the guard parade, whilst the regiment on duty marched towards the palace, the emperor, fancying the company led by Prince Daschkaw had not manœuvred according to order, hurried up to him, and, in the manner and spirit of a true drill-

serjeant, gave him a reprimand for this his supposed mistake. The prince respectfully denied being in fault; but, when the emperor returned to the charge, naturally warm and impatient of the least attack where his honour was concerned, he retorted with so much spirit and energy that his majesty, apprehensive of I know not what consequences, made his retreat with precipitancy at least equal to that with which he had advanced.

I was thrown into the utmost alarm, as may be conceived, at the report of this occurrence. That the offence, however taken by the emperor, should pass without notice, was extremely improbable, especially as advisers would not be wanting to recommend any measures of cold-blooded retaliation fatal to the military interests, or perhaps the life, of my husband. In a dilemma, therefore, such as the present, there seemed for the prince but a choice of evils: either to brave the emperor's resentment, and perhaps give some fresh occasion to it by remaining at Petersburg, or submit to a voluntary self-banishment until his anger would have time to cool, or until the accident of some political change might render its effects of very little importance. Added to the motives which influenced his friends in recommending this latter choice, I had others of my own, too powerful to admit of any tender pleadings on my part against their opinion. My mind had long been occupied with the contemplation of those dangers which, through the ruling power, seemed to

threaten the best interests of our country. The restlessness it occasioned I have already given an example of in my visit to the grand duchess; and though the projects which agitated my brain were extremely vague, one prevailing idea haunted my imagination, and led me, as if by inspiration, to believe that the period of a revolution was not far distant. Whatever might be the difficulties, and however certain the danger, attending its accomplishment, I had resolved to share them; but prudence, interest, affection, all concurred in making me yield a willing consent to my husband's absence. The prince having acquiesced in the wishes of his friends, some plausible pretext for his absence was next to be sought for; and as envoys I understood had not yet been appointed to all the foreign missions for announcing the accession of Peter III. to the throne, I entreated the grand chancellor to obtain his appointment in that capacity to one of the neighbouring courts. My request was immediately granted, and Prince Daschkaw, having received his orders to repair to Constantinople, lost no time in commencing his journey. Every post after his departure brought me letters from the prince, who, having once left Petersburg, proceeded slowly on his route. He made a considerable delay at Moscow, and then accompanied his mother to Troitskoe, her estate on the road to Kiow, where he still remained at the beginning of July.

The emperor, in the meantime, continued his usual

habits, and seemed to pride himself in giving disgust to his people. When peace was declared with the King of Prussia, for whom his mania had been daily exhibited in some act of folly, or some ridiculous imitation, the emperor's transports knew no bounds; and that nothing might be wanting to the celebration of this glorious event, he gave a grand banquet, to which all the nobility of the three first classes, and the foreign ministers, were invited. The empress took her usual seat at the middle of the table, and his majesty placed himself in an opposite corner, close to the Prussian minister. After dinner the emperor proposed three toasts, to be drunk in goblets to the discharge of cannon from the fortress. The first, "To the health of the imperial family;" the second, "To that of the King of Prussia;" and the third, "To the continuance of the happy peace which had been concluded." When the empress had drunk the health of the imperial family, Peter the Third ordered his adjutant-general, Goudovitch, who was standing behind his chair, to go and ask her majesty why she did not rise in drinking that toast. The empress answered, that as the imperial family consisted only of her husband, her son, and herself, she did not conceive his majesty would have thought her rising necessary. Goudovitch, having delivered her reply, was ordered to go back and inform her that she was *a fool*,* and ought to have

* The word *dura*, in Russ, is much stronger than the word by which it is here rendered.

known that his two uncles, the princes of Holstein, were also of the imperial family. Fearing, however, that his messenger might soften the expression, he himself repeated it out loud across the table, so as to be distinctly heard by a great part of the company. Her majesty, confounded and overwhelmed by the outrageous indecency of such an attack, burst into tears; but trying to recover herself, and to dissipate the general confusion it had occasioned, turned to my cousin, Count Strogonoff, the chamberlain in waiting behind her chair, and entreated him to relate some little pleasantry, in order to divert her thoughts from the present embarrassment. The count, who was a man of great humour, and never wanted a motive to attend to the wishes of her majesty, carefully smothered his own indignation, and spoke as gaily as possible on any subject which was likely to amuse and remove her chagrin, not at all unconscious of the enemies he himself had near the emperor, amongst whom was his own wife, who would not lose the opportunity of setting forth his present efforts as a subject of offence. As soon as the entertainment was at an end, the count received an order to betake himself to his country-house near Kamennoi Ostroff, and not to stir from it until special permission should be granted.

The occurrences of this day made a great sensation throughout Petersburg; and whilst the empress became an object of increasing interest and affection to the people, and by a contrast which

could not fail to be drawn, thus rose in their consideration, the emperor sank proportionately into contempt.

From causes such as these, connected with their effects as exemplified in the fate of this unfortunate monarch, a salutary lesson may be derived. It will hence appear, that to sink in public estimation is no less fatal to the power of kings than the exercise of the most capricious tyranny; and hence it is, that I have always considered a limited monarchy, where the sovereign is subordinate to the laws, and in some degree amenable to public opinion, to be amongst the wisest of human institutions.

On one particular occasion, when the emperor went to my uncle's, the grand chancellor, attended by the two Princes of Holstein and his usual suite, not feeling well enough to be present, I availed myself gladly of this excuse to avoid sharing an honour which, to say the truth, I esteemed very foreign to an amusement,—as the empress, who seldom went out except to take the air, never made one in his parties. My surprise, however, next day was great, when I heard of the tragi-comic scene which had occurred between the emperor and one of these same uncles, Prince George of Holstein. In the midst of some dispute, wherein each adhered furiously to his own opinion, they drew their swords, and were proceeding to run each other through the body, when old Baron Korf, the brother-in-law of my aunt, threw himself on his knees between

the combatants, and crying like an old woman, vowed he would not suffer a single stroke to reach either that had not first proved mortal to himself. By this timely interposition of the baron, who was much loved by both parties, and was, in truth, a very worthy creature, the rencontre was attended with no worse consequences than a serious alarm and uneasiness to my invalid uncle, into whose apartment my aunt had flown in the first moment of her terror on witnessing the beginning of the fray, and so communicated the affair to him. Many were the ridiculous squabbles I afterwards heard of between the uncle and nephew, before his majesty's departure to inspect the fleet at Cronstadt, preparatory to his threatened warfare on Denmark,—a design which had latterly so possessed his brain, that all the eloquence and expostulations even of the King of Prussia himself could not displace it.

From the period of my husband's departure for Constantinople I spared no exertion to inspire, to animate, and to confirm, those principles and opinions which were favourable to the cause I had espoused. Of the persons most especially in my confidence were some friends and brother officers of Prince Daschkaw, Passik and Bredichin, both captains in the Preobraginsky, and Major Raslovlief and his brother, a captain in the Ismaeloffsky guards. The two latter I had no frequent opportunity of seeing until the month of April, when I found it necessary to ascertain the sentiments of the sol-

diers. To prevent, however, any suspicion, I continued my usual habits of life, frequenting occasionally the houses of my relations and friends, and, to all appearance, so much occupied with the ordinary pursuits of my age and sex, that it never could be seen, except in the privacy of my own thoughts, that I was wholly engaged in projects involving the interests of an empire.

As soon as my ideas on the means of a well-organized conspiracy became in some measure definite and consistent, I directed my attention towards gaining over to our views, and implicating if possible in our designs, some of those persons whose consideration and influence in the state might at least afford a sanction to our enterprise. Amongst such was Marshal Razoumoffsky, commander of the Ismaeloffsky guards, an officer much beloved by his whole corps, and, although very favourably looked upon at court, one who could distinctly enough perceive the monarch's incapacity for government, and the consequent danger of the times. It is true, he loved his country as much as a natural apathy would allow him to love anything; but, abounding in wealth, covered with all the honours a prince could bestow, sunk in indolence, and shrinking from anything like enterprise of dangerous or doubtful issue, how was he to be worked upon for the purpose in view? Arduous as the undertaking might be, I was not to be baffled by considerations of ordinary difficulty. One day, when visiting as

usual at the English ambassador's, I heard a report that the guards had shewn a disposition to revolt, chiefly on account of the Danish war. I inquired of Mr. Keith, whether they had been instigated by any officers of rank. He told me he believed not, as there was little probability of the generals and superior officers objecting to a war in which they might so easily distinguish themselves. "These indiscreet rumours," he observed, "will be the occasion of some military punishments, and a few banishments into Siberia, and there the matter will rest."

I took advantage of this circumstance to confer with those officers of Razoumoffsky's regiment who were already in my confidence; the two Rasloffleffs and M. Lassounsky, who were all three on intimate terms with the marshal, especially the latter, who was supposed to have considerable influence over him. Although they could not flatter me with any hopes of his positive co-operation, I nevertheless recommended them, in their familiar intercourse with the marshal, to dwell on the circumstances of the late mutiny, and infer suspicions of an impending change; at first to speak vaguely, and, according to their advances, more explicitly, of the conspiracy on foot, and as the plot thickened, and the moment for action approached, gradually to throw off all disguise, and to lay open our designs, when he should thus be too much implicated in our secret to turn informer. To prevent his retracting, he

might, I observed, be put in mind, that to be privy to our plans was, in fact, to be an accomplice; and as the danger would be shared alike, it would be no less for his interest than for ours to place himself, when wanted, at the head of his regiment. Everything was done according to my desire, and the stratagem was crowned in the issue with success the most complete.

Another person to be gained, of infinite importance to the success of our views, was M. Panin, governor, as I have before mentioned, to the grand duke, who possessed all the weight and influence which is usually derived from so distinguished an office. During the spring I saw him at my own house, where he, like others of my relations, came to visit me as frequently as his court duties would permit. At such times I ventured to speak out to him on the probabilities and consequences of a revolution which might give us a better sovereign; and on these points I endeavoured, as it were incidentally, to draw forth his opinion. He entered always with interest into such subjects, and would sometimes indulge in a favourite speculation of placing his pupil, the young prince, on the throne, and of establishing a form of government on the principles of the Swedish monarchy.

A youthful and female conspirator was not likely all at once to gain the confidence of a cautious, calculating politician like M. Panin; but, in spite of my youth and sex, the consideration in which I was

held by others raised me to some degree of consequence in his. Prince Repnin, his favourite nephew, whom I often met at Princess Kourakin's, knew me well, and loved to describe me to our common uncle as a character formed on the austerest principles of virtue, of an enthusiastic turn of mind, glowing with patriotism, and without a thought of personal or family aggrandizement.

The favourable impression which such a representation perhaps might give was certainly strengthened by a little incident, which I will relate, trifling it is true, but enough to exemplify the sincerity of my eulogist, who, in a moment of alarm, occasioned by an extravagance of the emperor, gave me a proof of his confidence by seeking, as it would seem, my counsel and assistance. The entertainment to which I have before alluded, given on the occasion of the peace with Prussia, was succeeded by another at the summer palace, where the emperor without ceremony entertained, after his own fashion, his particular associates, the Holstein generals, the Prussian minister, some ladies of the court, and, amongst others of the party, M. Repnin, and gave a full loose to his joviality by every kind of excess, until four o'clock in the morning, when he was taken to his carriage in a senseless state of intoxication. From this scene Prince Repnin drove direct to my house. I was startled from my sleep by a person rapping at my dressing-room door, when I instantly awoke my good old woman, who lay by my

bedside. After having inquired, in very bad humour, who it was that disturbed her repose, she brought me word that my cousin, Prince Repnin, insisted on seeing me. I hurried on my clothes, and went to ask what could have brought him at such an hour. He appeared extremely agitated, and, without any preface, exclaimed, in a tone of the deepest despondency, "All is lost, my dear cousin; our cause is lost; your sister, the Countess Elizabeth, has received the order of St. Catherine, and I am going to be sent minister-adjutant, or minister valet-de-chambre, to the King of Prussia!" Shocked as I was at a circumstance which seemed a prelude to the empress's downfall, as the order of St. Catherine had hitherto only been conferred on princesses of the blood, after a moment's reflection I replied, that one should not calculate too curiously on the actions, or too seriously apprehend the permanency of any designs, issuing from such a head as that of Peter the Third. I urged him, therefore, to return home and take some repose, but as speedily as possible to recount the occurrence of that evening to his uncle, M. Panin.

As soon as he was gone, I set myself seriously to reflect on the various projects which were in turns conceived and then rejected by the conspirators. They appeared to me for the most part impracticable speculations, and schemes without any fixed principle or consistency of design. On this one point only was there a distinct understanding,—that the

emperor's departure with his forces for Denmark should be the signal for striking a blow.

Much remained to be done before the favourable moment arrived, and the time proposed was drawing near; I therefore resolved at the next interview with M. Panin to throw off all reserve, and make a full disclosure of the nature and extent of our conspiracy. As soon as an opportunity offered, I first spoke of a serious design which was formed to bring about a revolution. He listened attentively, and in his reply laid much stress on the forms which ought to attend such a proceeding, and the co-operation of the senate. That the sanction of such a body would have its advantages I did not deny; but could an attempt be made to gain its concurrence, I asked, without the greatest risk? I agreed in his opinion, also, that the empress could not be brought forward as having any right to the throne, except as regent during the minority of her son; but I combated his scruples as to the distant objects of a revolution. "Let the act be once done," said I, "and not one person in a hundred will consider it as having any further motive than an immediate and pressing grievance, which admits of redress only through a change in the ruling power." I then named to him the principal persons confederates along with me in order to produce this change;—the two Rasloffleffs, Lassounsky, Passik, Bredichin, Baskakoff, Hetroff, Prince Bariatinsky, and the Orloffs. He expressed great surprise and alarm at

finding how far I had committed myself, and this, too, without any communication or previous understanding with the empress. I justified my reserve, however, on this point as an act of prudence towards her majesty, who could not even be privy to our plans, as yet so dubious and unmatured, without perplexity, and needless exposure, perhaps, to danger.

From the tenour of all my uncle said during this conference, I perceived he neither wanted courage nor inclination to join us, but decision as to the course we should pursue. Before we parted, and I did not prolong the conversation by any needless discussions, I recommended him to secure Teploff to our side, who had just gained his release from a fortress where he had been confined by Peter the Third. His eloquence and popular style of writing would make him of use in the first moments of a revolution; but the ascendancy he held over the mind of Razoumoffsky was a far more important object for seeking his support. In fine, I entreated M. Panin not to speak himself of proclaiming the grand duke, but to leave such a proposal to me; as, coming from the preceptor in favour of his pupil, it might render his motives liable to misconstruction, but from one known to be the warmest friend the empress had in the world it could give no occasion whatever for distrust or suspicion. This scheme I accordingly did afterwards propose, but, happily, its accomplishment was frustrated by that

gracious Providence which watched over the destinies of the empire.

Amongst the foreigners who came to seek their fortunes at Petersburg was a Piedmontese of the name of Oddart, who, under my uncle's patronage, had obtained the situation of advocate in the college of commerce. He was a middle-aged, sickly person, of acute and lively parts, well informed, crafty, and intriguing; but from his ignorance of the Russian language, products, and internal communication, finding himself very unfit for the post he held, he was desirous of gaining some employment in the service of the empress. With this view, having requested my mediation, I recommended him in quality of secretary to her majesty; but as her correspondence was confined to her relations, the empress, it seemed, had no occasion for one, and was otherwise disinclined, from some reasonable motives of prudence, to engage a foreigner in that capacity. I procured him, however, a situation in her service, as superintendent of some paltry pin-money estate, appropriated to her use by Peter the Third, or rather, as projector of the means by which it might be turned to account.

I am led to speak of this person, as, amongst the falsehoods circulated respecting the revolution, he was said to have been my chief instigator and adviser. It will be seen in one of the letters of the empress that I introduced him to her notice, and it is equally true that I recommended him, for the

sake of his health, to attend Count Strogonoff when ordered to his country place by the emperor; but so far from being in my confidence, I seldom saw M. Oddart, and not once during the three weeks preceding the revolution. I was glad to procure him a livelihood, but I never asked his advice on any occasion; and I believe he knew me a great deal too well to dare make any such proposals to me on the part of M. Panin, as some French writers, in their libellous and senseless pamphlets, have thought fit to charge him with.

But to return from this digression. The Archbishop of Novorogod, a prelate distinguished for his learning, looked up to by all ranks of people, and almost idolized by the clergy, had no need to be put in mind how little the church establishment had to hope from such a sovereign as Peter the Third. His own apprehensions on this account, which had long been excited, and which he took no pains to conceal, rendered him, if not from his high dignity an active partisan, a very animated favourer at least of our designs. Such a character was no inconsiderable acquisition, for, added to his other means of commanding respect, he possessed such a power of manly and persuasive eloquence as carried away the understandings and hearts of all his auditors.

I had the satisfaction of hearing from Prince Wolchonsky, an uncle of my husband's, on his return from the army, that a spirit of discontent had very generally manifested itself amongst the soldiers, who

thought it extremely unnatural to turn their arms against their former ally, Maria Theresa, in favour of the King of Prussia, whose troops they had so long been combating. I communicated this intelligence to M. Panin, and also the apparently favourable disposition of the prince my informer, who, as afterwards appeared, was perfectly ready to give us his support.

Our party was daily increasing in numbers; but there was no corresponding progress in the arrangement of our plans. During this state of things, I spent half my time in the solitude of my country place near Petersburg; and whilst I thus withdrew myself from the society of all my friends, as it might appear for the purpose of superintending some improvements in my estate, I sought to methodize my ideas, and to devise some practicable and consistent scheme of action, suited to the nature and objects of our conspiracy.

The country place of which I am speaking is situated a few versts from the city, near Krasnoi Kabac, and was part of an extensive marshy tract of ground formerly covered with thick forests of birch, which Peter the Third had been advised to apportion out among several of the nobility. By means of draining and cultivation much of this unproductive waste was soon converted by its wealthy proprietors into fertile and beautiful plains. The allotment in my possession had been at first granted to one of the Holstein generals, who not having courage enough

to attempt its improvement, resigned over his claim, and left it again at the disposal of government, for any one who chose to accept it. Amongst others it was offered to me, but from my want of pecuniary means, even for the most ordinary improvement, and my determination to avoid any expenses which might inconvenience my husband, I felt as much alarm at the idea of being its possessor as the Holstein general. My father, however, who had procured me the offer, being very desirous that I should accept it, proposed to build a house on it at his own cost, and by a promise of this nature overcame some of the scruples that alone made me hesitate.

There happened to be about this time at Petersburg a hundred peasants belonging to my husband, who were permitted to work a certain part of every year for their own advantage; and these good peasants, out of gratitude and attachment to a very liberal and indulgent master, offered their services on this new estate for four successive days, and afterwards to continue their work by parties in turn every holiday. By their exertions in cutting little canals and other drains, the higher ground was soon prepared for the erection of a house and offices. But notwithstanding the interest I was beginning to feel for this first spot of ground I ever called my own, I would not give it a name until I could consecrate it with the name of that saint on whose auspicious day success should crown our political enterprise.

On one of my visits to this place I was accompanied

on horseback by my cousin, Count Strogonoff, and wishing to point out some improvements, I attempted to walk over what seemed a piece of verdant meadow, but, unluckily, I stepped up to my knees in a bog. A violent cold and fever were the consequence; during which I received a very friendly letter from the empress, who, in a good-humoured way, laid all the blame of this accident on the negligence of my attendant beau,—*the monkey*, as she used to call him; a name which he certainly had as good a title to as ugliness coupled with excessive drollery could give. I contrived to answer this letter, when my fever was at its height, and spoke, I believe, of my revolutionary hopes and expectations, but in a strain so incoherent and unintelligible, in such a jumble of verse and prose, of French and Russian, that the empress, in one of her little notes afterwards, when I was recovered, alluding to something I had said, begged to know how long I had been gifted with the spirit of prophecy. As to the warm and tender expressions of friendship which my letter conveyed, she could very well understand and feel their import, but as to the day which was to give a name to my estate, she confessed herself quite at a loss to comprehend my meaning. Her majesty at this time frequently wrote to me, and appeared much more at ease, and less affected by circumstances, than many of her friends, whose anticipations of a favourable and approaching change were far more sanguine than her own.

Meanwhile, a case occurred which exposed the emperor, in his judicial capacity as sovereign, to greater contempt than any of his follies on ordinary occasions had hitherto excited.

During the late reign, the people of Servia, who were of the Greek church, as well as many of the same persuasion who had sought refuge in Hungary and other countries under the dominion of Austria, sent deputies to the court of Elizabeth, entreating her protection and a grant of land in her empire, in order to escape the persecution of the Roman-catholic clergy, who were all-powerful in the time of Maria Theresa. Her majesty, although with the best dispositions towards the Empress of Germany, was ready to accede to their request from the stronger sway of a religious motive; and having received the deputies favourably, she granted them some fine tracts of country in the southern parts of Russia. Money was advanced to assist in the expenses of their emigration, and to enable them to form amongst themselves some regiments of hussars. It so happened, that one of these deputies, of the name of Horwat, an artful and intriguing person, having wormed himself into the confidence of those nobles to whose superintendence the affairs of the new colony were committed, got possession of the money appropriated to this service, and instead of applying any of it to the relief of several thousand settlers who had already arrived at the place of their destination, he kept it in his own hands, and began

to treat his unfortunate countrymen as slaves whom he was appointed to govern.

These oppressed people laid their grievances before the empress, who sent Prince Mechtchersky to redress them; but from the illness and consequent death of Elizabeth, added to other obstacles, the case which had been latterly brought before the senate remained undecided. Horwat, as soon as he heard of the empress's death, hastened to Petersburg, and made presents of two thousand ducats each to three gentlemen about the person of the emperor, whom he supposed the most in favour, and most likely to influence his majesty. These he believed to be, Leon Narishkin, for no other reason than on account of his great celebrity as a buffoon, General Milgounoff, and the Procureur-General Gleboff. The two latter spoke boldly of their bribe to the emperor, and were greatly extolled for their open conduct in making no secret of it to him. "You are noble fellows," said he, "and if you will let me share the spoil, I will go myself to the senate and give a decision in favour of Horwat." His majesty was as good as his word; and by that very decision sanctioned an act which lost to Russia a hundred thousand inhabitants, who wanted no other encouragement to follow the fortunes of their countrymen than the assurance of that protection which had been already promised. The emperor, when he heard of Narishkin's bribe, which, unluckily for the latter, had not been voluntarily confessed, ordered him to

surrender the whole sum, which his majesty took care to appropriate to himself, as a punishment for such an ungenerous want of confidence, and had great delight for many days afterwards in tauntingly asking what Narishkin had done with the two thousand ducats he had received of Horwat as a bribe. A transaction such as this, infamous as it might appear in any private individual, reduced at once the sovereign, in public opinion, to a lower level even than the buffoon, and exposed both parties to the scorn and ridicule of all ranks of people.

Much about the same time a farce, scarcely credible, in which the emperor took a principal part, was performed before the whole regiment of Ismaeloffsky guards. Marshal Razoumoffsky was called upon one day to manœuvre his regiment before the emperor, in pursuance of a general order, which required every commander to make a similar exhibition of his skill. After the review, during which the marshal, though not much of a military character, had acquitted himself to his majesty's satisfaction, as the emperor was retiring with his suite to dinner, in the highest good humour possible, he happened to see his favourite negro (Narcissus I believe he was named) at a distance, furiously engaged with some person, and fighting with hands and feet. The emperor was at first very much entertained, but when he perceived the negro's antagonist to be the *scavenger* of the regiment, his countenance suddenly changed, and he exclaimed with an expres-

sion of consternation, " Narcissus is lost to us for ever !" What he could mean was quite unintelligible, until Razoumoffsky inquired the cause of his distress. " What !" said the emperor, " don't you feel, as a military man, how impossible it is that I should ever have him in my company again, after such a stain and disgrace as having come in contact with the scavenger?" The marshal, affecting to enter into the emperor's feelings, with a face of as much solemnity as he could assume, proposed that the honour of Narcissus should be retrieved by covering him with the banners of the regiment.

This idea, which was like the resurrection of his favourite, was met with delight by the emperor, who, after embracing Razoumoffsky, summoned Narcissus before him. " Dost thou not know," said he to the negro, " that thou art covered with infamy, and for ever lost to our society, by the foul disgrace of that scavenger's touch ?" The poor fellow, still foaming with rage, and not comprehending a word of this language, began to defend his conduct, protesting that, as a brave man, he thought it right to punish the rascal who had attacked him first. But when, by the emperor's order, they proceeded to pass him three times under the banners of the regiment, Narcissus resisted the operation so stoutly that four men were obliged to hold him before they could finally accomplish this work of purification.

This, however, was not enough ; for the emperor, insisting that some drops of blood from the negro's

body were still required to wash away the stain on his honour, was not to be satisfied until the point of the banner was for this purpose applied to his head. The poor negro's shrieks and outcries against his master, and the extreme absurdity of the whole scene, put all the officers to the torture in suppressing their provocation to outright laughter, rendered almost irresistible by the extraordinary solemnity of the emperor, who seemed to contemplate the work in hand as no less indispensable to the redemption of his favourite than to the lustre of his own imperial glory.

My father was in no favour at the present court; and though the emperor had given some proofs of respect for my uncle, the grand chancellor, he did not suffer himself to be at all influenced by his political counsels. • To act as corporal-major every morning on the guard-parade, to eat a good dinner, to drink Burgundy, to spend the evening among buffoons and a certain set of ladies, and to do everything which the King of Prussia ordered him to do, was what formed the felicity and glory of Peter the Third, and is an epitome of his mode of life for the seven months which constituted his reign. The great enterprise he had in view was to reconquer a handful of land from the King of Denmark, which he thought belonged to him; and such was his impatience on this point that he could not suspend its commencement even until after his coronation. •

CHAPTER V.

Removal of the court to Peterhoff—Impatience of the Guards—Portentous calm—The memorable 27th of June—Arrest of a conspirator—Its unlooked-for results—Accident more potent than design in facilitating a revolution—Promptitude of Princess Daschkaw—Precipitation of the catastrophe—Visit of young Orloff to the princess—Her happy foresight in providing a carriage, and urging the empress's immediate presence in the capital—Success of the enterprise—The Empress Catherine proclaimed head of the empire—the princess repairs to the palace—Meeting between them—The empress describes her escape from Peterhoff—The empress and the princess in military uniform—A female senator—Precautionary cares of the princess—The troops reviewed—Return of the empress to Peterhoff.

THE removal of the court to Peterhoff and Oranienbaum, which took place about the commencement of the summer, allowed me as much leisure as I could wish; and as I was thus effectually relieved from the emperor's evening parties, I was not sorry to remain in town. At this time many of the guards, apprehensive of being suddenly embarked for Denmark, betrayed strong symptoms of uneasiness and impatience, and had begun to circulate rumours that the empress's life was in danger, in order to accelerate

the moment when their services might be required at home. I therefore authorized some officers in our secret to give out to these soldiers, whom they narrowly watched, and had great difficulty to restrain, that I was in daily communication with the empress, and that I pledged myself to apprise them of the favourable moment for action whenever it should arrive.

In other respects everything remained in a portentous calm until the 27th of June, a day for ever memorable in the annals of my country—a day during which the conflict of hope and fear, of anguish and transport, throbbed through the breast of every conspirator. When I reflect on the events of this important day; on a glorious revolution brought about without a plan, and by means so inadequate to such a result, by individuals whose conceptions and opinions as to the object in view were as opposite and discordant as their several characters; many of them but little acquainted with each other, and as little worthy of being classed together, having nothing in common but one prevailing wish, which the accident of this day crowned with more ample success than usually attends the wisest and best of plans; when I reflect on this, it is impossible not to acknowledge the hand of Divine Providence as guiding and giving effect to endeavours otherwise so vague and defective. If the chiefs of conspiracies were candidly to acknowledge how much they are indebted to chance and opportunity

for the success of their enterprises, they must abate of many a lofty pretension on the plea of their own merits. As for myself, I honestly avow that although I might have been the first to contemplate in the probable issue of our plot, the dethronement of a monarch unable to rule, yet neither the histories which I had read, nor even the glowing imagination of eighteen years of age, could picture a vision of those events which reality in a few hours presented to our view.

It was in the afternoon of the 27th of June, that Gregory Orloff came to announce to me the arrest of Captain Passik. This latter, and Bredichin, had been with me the evening before, to warn me of the danger in which we were placed by the extreme impatience of the soldiers, especially of the grenadiers, who, giving credit to the rumours in circulation respecting the empress, spoke openly against Peter the Third, and loudly demanded to be led against the Holstein troops at Oranienbaum. In order to quiet the apprehensions of these two gentlemen, who seemed to have taken considerable alarm, as well as to shew that I did not personally shrink from the danger before us, I desired them to repeat an assurance to their soldiers, as coming direct from me, that I had daily accounts from the empress, who was in perfect safety, and under no sort of restraint at Peterhoff, and that it was absolutely necessary that they should be tranquil and obedient to orders, otherwise the favourable moment

for action might never arrive. Passik and Bredichin lost no time in conveying these injunctions to the soldiers, but in the confusion and tumult which prevailed, our secret came to the knowledge of Voicikoff, major of the Preobraginsky guards, who caused the immediate arrest of Passik, and thus by an apparently inauspicious, though in truth a most fortunate incident, hastened the discovery and happy catastrophe of our plot.

When Orloff came to my house with the news of this arrest, of which he knew neither the cause nor the particulars, M. Panin was with me, who either from his natural phlegm and dilatoriness of character, or because he wished perhaps to hide from me the danger it disclosed, seemed to view this event in a far less serious light than I did, and spoke of it with great composure, as probably the consequence of some military offence. I, on the contrary, considered it as the signal for taking some decided step, and though I could not impress him with the like idea, Orloff was desired to go immediately to the barracks of the regiment, and learn the particulars of Passik's confinement, in order to ascertain whether he was guarded as a state criminal, or merely detained under arrest as a military offender; and if the former should prove to be the case, he was desired to return to my house with all the particulars he could obtain, and to send his brother on a similar errand to M. Panin.

When Orloff was gone, I begged my uncle

Panin to leave me, under pretence of wishing for some repose. But as soon as he had taken his departure, I covered myself up in a man's great coat, and in this disguise set out on foot to the house of Rasloffleff.

I had not gone far on my way when I perceived a man on horseback in full gallop, riding as it were towards me. I know not why I came to imagine it one of the Orloffs, having never seen any of them except Gregory; but so strangely was I impressed with a persuasion of its being so, that I had courage enough to arrest the impetuosity of his course, calling out to him by that name. The horseman stopped short, and being told who it was that addressed him,—"I was on my way to inform you, Princess," said he, "that Passik is under arrest as a prisoner of state, guarded by four sentinels at the door, and two at each window of his room. My brother is gone with this intelligence to M. Panin, and I have just announced it to Rasloffleff." "And is the latter," said I, "much alarmed at the news?" "In some degree," replied he; "but why, madam, do you remain in the street? Suffer me to attend you home." "We are less observed where we are," said I, "than we should be at my own house, exposed to the curiosity of servants. But, on the present occasion, a very few words will suffice. Go tell Rasloffleff, Lassounsky, Tchertkoff, and Bredichin, to repair without a moment's delay to their regiment, the Ismaeloffsky guards, and remain at

their posts, in order to receive the empress at the suburbs of the city. Then, sir, do you, or one of your brothers, fly like lightning to Peterhoff, and from me entreat the empress to place herself instantly in a post carriage, which she will find in readiness, and drive to the quarters of the Ismaeloffsky guards, who are waiting to proclaim her sovereign, and to escort her into the capital. Tell her, that expedition is of such importance that I would not delay this message, even for a few moments, by returning to my own house to write it; but that in the street I conjured you to fly, and by word of mouth to hasten her arrival. I shall perhaps go," added I, "and meet her myself."

As to the post carriage of which I spoke, it is necessary to mention that, on the evening before, after the visit of Passik and Bredichin, thinking it probable, from the accounts they gave of the soldiers' impatience, that they were not likely to wait until orders were given for them to act, I wrote to Madam Schkourin, wife of the empress's valet-de-chambre, to request she would send her carriage with four post horses to her husband at Peterhoff, desiring in my name that it might be kept in waiting for her majesty, in case her presence should be suddenly required at Petersburg; being well aware how difficult, if not impossible, it would be in such an exigency to procure one of the court carriages without the knowledge of M. Ismaeloff, grand-master of the household, a person of all others the least disposed

to favour her majesty's escape. M. Panin, who all along considered the catastrophe of a revolution remote as well as uncertain, laughed at this act of foresight as a very precipitate piece of caution. But such as it was, had it been neglected, Heaven only knows whether we should ever have attained the accomplishment of our hopes.

Having dismissed Orloff, I returned home, but in such agitation of mind and spirits as left me little inclination to repose. I had ordered a suit of man's clothes to be in readiness for me this evening, but the tailor had not yet sent it. This was a great disappointment, as the want of male apparel imposed a check and restraint on my movements. In order to repress the suspicions or curiosity of my servants, I went to bed, and in an hour afterwards I was alarmed by a violent knocking at the street door. Starting from my bed, and passing into the adjoining room, I desired that the person whoever it was might be admitted. A young stranger appeared, who announced himself to be the youngest Orloff. He came, he said, to ask if it was not too soon to send for the empress, who would be unnecessarily alarmed by a premature summons to Petersburg.

I could hear no more. My indignation was roused to the utmost height, and I did not attempt to suppress the rage I felt against all these brothers for presuming (as I most ungraciously expressed myself) to hesitate on the directions I had given to Alexis Orloff. "You have lost time already,"

said I, " which is most precious. And as to your fears of alarming the empress, rather let her be conveyed in a fainting fit to Petersburg, than expose her to the risk of spending her life in a prison, or of sharing with us the scaffold. Tell, therefore, your brother to ride full speed to Peterhoff, and bring the empress into the city without a moment's delay; lest Peter the Third should have time to receive advice, and by arriving before her, should chance to frustrate a scheme which Heaven itself holds out to save our country as well as the empress."

He appeared affected by my earnestness, and left me with an assurance that his brother should instantly set about the execution of my orders.

After his departure, I became a prey to the most gloomy reflections. Plunged in a desponding train of thought, scarcely an image presented itself but of the most appalling nature. I longed to go forth and meet the empress; but the disappointment I have mentioned as to the suit of man's clothes was an evil spell which bound me to the solitude and inaction of my own chamber. My imagination, however, constantly at work, would at some moments anticipate the triumphs of the empress, and all the consequent happiness of my country; but these pleasing illusions were hastily succeeded by others which made me shudder with horror. The least sound startled me, and presented Catherine to my view—that idol of my fancy—pale, disfigured, dying—the victim perhaps of our impru-

dence. This dreadful night, which appeared to me a whole life of suffering, at length passed away; but how shall I describe the transport with which I hailed that eventful morning when intelligence was brought me that the empress had been ushered into the capital, and proclaimed head of the empire by the Ismaeloffsky guards, who were accompanying her to the church of Kazan, followed by the rest of the military and the citizens, all eager to take the oath of allegiance.

It was now six o'clock. I ordered my maid to bring me a gala dress, and hastily set out for the winter palace, where her majesty, I concluded, would take up her residence. It would be difficult to say how I contrived to reach it. The palace was so entirely encircled, and every approach to it so blocked up with soldiers who had flocked together from all parts of the city, and united themselves with the guards, that I was obliged to alight from my carriage, and endeavour to force my way through the crowd on foot. But no sooner was I recognised by some of the officers and soldiers, than I felt myself borne off the ground, and rapidly passed over the heads of all before me, who with one animated shout of approbation acknowledged me as their common friend, and welcomed me with a thousand blessings. At length safely set down in an antechamber, with my head giddy, a ruffle torn off, my robe tattered, and my whole dress in the utmost disorder,—a token of this my triumphal

manner of entrance, I hastened into her majesty's presence. We were soon in each other's arms. "Heaven be praised!" was all we could either of us for some moments utter.

She then described her escape from Peterhoff, and her apprehensions and hopes preceding this crisis. I listened to her with a beating heart, and in turn spoke of the anxious hours I had just passed, which were rendered more painful from being unable, as I explained, to meet her, and to watch the progress of her destiny, and of the good or evil fortune of the empire. We again cordially embraced; and never was the happiness of mortal so full, so complete, as mine at this moment! Soon afterwards, when I observed that her majesty wore the ribbon of St. Catherine, and had not yet assumed that of St. Andrew, the highest order of the state,—which no woman was entitled to receive, but of which as reigning sovereign she was grand mistress,—I ran to M. Panin to borrow his blue ribbon, which I threw over her shoulder; and receiving the discarded insignia of St. Catherine, by her majesty's desire put them into my pocket.

After a slight repast, the empress proposed to move at the head of the troops to Peterhoff, and that I should accompany her on her expedition. For this purpose, choosing to equip herself in the uniform of the guards, she borrowed a suit from Captain Talitzen, and I, following her example, procured another from Lieutenant Pouschkin, two

young officers about our respective sizes. These dresses, by the bye, were the ancient national uniform of the Preobraginsky guards, and such as had been worn ever since the time of Peter the First, until superseded by the Prussian uniform introduced by Peter the Third. And it is a circumstance worthy of notice, that the empress had on this morning scarcely entered the city, when the guards, as if by order, having thrown away their foreign costume, appeared to a man in the ancient uniform of their country.

When the empress withdrew to prepare for the journey, I went home to make the alteration in my dress necessary for accompanying her; and on my return to the palace, her majesty, I found, was holding a council relative to the manifestos about to be issued. She was attended by such of the senators as were then in town, and by Teploff, who had been called on to officiate as secretary.

As intelligence of the empress's escape from Peterhoff, and the consequent events in the city, must by this time have reached Oranienbaum, it occurred to me that Peter the Third, listening for once to bold and sensible advice, might make a prompt movement in order to check the revolt of his troops, and quickly appear before St. Petersburg. On the impulse of the moment I resolved to communicate this idea instantly to the empress. The two officers on duty at the door of the Council-chamber, taken perhaps by surprise as I rapidly and

without hesitation approached, or fancying me possessed of some privilege paramount to the countersign, without which they had orders to admit no one, threw open the door and suffered me to pass. I hastened up to her majesty, and whispered the idea to her which had prompted this intrusion, entreating her to use every possible means of guarding against the arrival of Peter the Third. Teploff was immediately called upon to draw out an ukase, and to despatch copies of it, along with other instructions, to two several parties, who were forthwith ordered to occupy the two entrances into the city by water, the only approaches which were unprotected. The surprise which my appearance occasioned among these reverend senators, none of whom recognised me in my military disguise, being easily conceived by the empress, she informed them who I was, and that to my friendship, ever active in her service, she owed the suggestion at that moment of a very necessary precaution which she had entirely overlooked. The senators with one accord then rose from their seats to salute me—a mark of respect at which I blushed, and was utterly abashed to acknowledge it, as so little due to what I seemed, a boy in military uniform, who had intruded into their sanctuary, and had with so little deference whispered in the ear of majesty.

Soon afterwards, when the sitting was at an end, and orders were given necessary for the safety of the capital, we mounted our horses, and on our way to

Peterhoff passed in review twelve thousand troops, besides volunteers, whose numbers were every moment increasing.

At Krasnoi Kabac, ten versts distant from Petersburg, we made a halt of some hours, to refresh the troops, who had been twelve hours on foot. We were ourselves also in want of rest; and for my own part, for the last fifteen nights I had scarcely closed my eyes. When we entered our wretched little quarters, her majesty proposed that we should lie down in our clothes, on the only bed it contained,—which, spite of all the surrounding filth, was a luxury to my wearied limbs too grateful to be refused. We had scarcely adjusted ourselves on the bed, over which I had first taken the precaution of spreading a large cloak, borrowed from Colonel Carr, when I perceived a little door behind the empress's pillow. Not knowing whither or to what it led, I begged permission to go out and assure myself that all was secure; and having found that it communicated by a narrow, dark passage with the outer court, I posted two sentinels to guard it, with orders not to stir from the spot without my permission. This being done, I returned to the empress, whom I found examining some papers, and as we could not sleep, she read me copies of the manifestos she intended to publish. We had leisure also to deliberate on what remained to be done, full of joyful anticipations, which had now nearly displaced every apprehension of danger.

CHAPTER VI.

Movements of Peter the Third—His indecision—Departs for Cronstadt to take possession of the fleet—Is anticipated by the empress—Makes overtures of abdication—Conduct of the grand chancellor—Surrender of the emperor—Is conducted to the Castle of Ropsha—Declares his abdication—Gregory Orloff—Riot among the soldiery suppressed by the princess—She makes a painful discovery concerning Orloff and the empress—Return to St. Petersburg—Entrance to the capital—Extraordinary scene—Interview of the princess with her father and family—She returns to the palace—Receives the order of St. Catherine—Conversation with the empress—Offered reward to the princess—A comic scene at the palace.

In the meantime, Peter the Third, refusing to follow the advice of Marshal Munich, could decide on nothing for himself. He drove backwards and forwards between Peterhoff and Oranienbaum, till, finding nothing gained, he yielded at length to the solicitations of his friends, and set off for Cronstadt, to make himself master of the fleet. The importance, however, of securing the fleet in her favour had not been overlooked by the empress. Admiral Talitzen was sent to command it in her name, who seeing the emperor approach the shore at Cronstadt, of

which place he had already taken possession, would not suffer him to land. The unhappy Peter, when thus compelled to return to Oranienbaum, dispatched General Ismaeloff to the empress, with overtures the most submissive, and an offer of abdication.

The bearer of these propositions found us on our way to Peterhoff; and how different was his language and manner to those of my uncle the grand chancellor, who had presented himself before the empress just as we were leaving the city! This latter came to offer his remonstrances against the steps the empress was taking; when, finding his arguments of little avail, he withdrew from her presence, refusing to take the oath of allegiance. "Be assured, madam," said he, with the calm dignity of a great soul, "that I will never offer your government harm, either in word or by my actions; and to prove the sincerity of this profession, place one of your trusty officers as a guard over my house; but never will I betray the oath I have sworn to the emperor, as long as he continues to exist."

It was impossible not to admire the conduct of my truly respectable uncle, which in this instance was exclusively influenced by a strict principle of duty to a prince whose favour he had never sought, and whose actions, so far from inspiring confidence in his government, had been observed by my uncle with pain, and contemplated in their consequences with serious alarm.

Her majesty sent back General Ismaeloff to Peter the Third, conjuring him to advise the emperor to surrender himself into her power, in order to avoid the incalculable mischief which must result from an opposite conduct, and promising that no effort should be wanting on her part to render his existence as agreeable as possible in any residence he might choose at a distance from Petersburg.

By the time we reached Trinity Convent, the vice chancellor, Prince Galitzin came up with a letter from the emperor, and the crowd which accompanied us was now every instant increased by parties which flocked to us from the opposite side.

Soon after our arrival at Peterhoff, Peter the Third, accompanied by Generals Ismaeloff and Goudovitch was announced as having reached the palace and surrendered himself. He was conducted, unseen almost by any one, into a remote apartment, where dinner was served; and as the castle of Ropsha, which had belonged to him when grand duke, was the place he chose for his future residence, he was immediately afterwards conveyed thither, escorted by Alexis Orloff, and in command under him, Captain Passik, Prince Theodore Bariatinsky, and M. Baskakoff, Lieutenant of the Preobraginsky guards, to whom the empress had entrusted the custody of his person.

I did not see him at this juncture, although I had the opportunity of doing so; but I was assured by

those who did, that he appeared little affected by his change of fortune. Before he set out from Peterhoff, he wrote two or three little notes to the empress. In one, the particulars of which I happened to learn, he declared, in distinct and express terms, his abdication of the crown; and after naming some persons whom he wished to accompany him, he spoke of the supplies necessary for his table, among which he did not forget to stipulate for a plentiful supply of Burgundy, pipes, and tobacco.

But enough on the subject of this ill-fated prince, whom nature had formed for the lowest walks of life, and whom fortune had unhappily placed on a throne. Although not positively vicious, his weakness of parts, his want of education, and his natural bias to everything base and demeaning, might have proved in their consequences, had he continued to govern, no less pernicious to his people than habits of the most deliberate vice.

During this whole day, and ever since the evening before, I had scarcely been a moment at rest; but so much were my mind and affections engaged in recent circumstances and events, that I never felt the least fatigue except when I ceased to be actively employed. This evening I was busied in a variety of ways, sometimes at one end of the palace, sometimes at another; then among the guards stationed at the different entrances; and whilst on one occasion, returning from the Princess of Holstein, a relation of the empress, with a request that she might have

leave to see her majesty, what was my astonishment at beholding Gregory Orloff stretched at full length on a sofa in one of the rooms, (having hurt his leg, as it appeared,) with a large packet of papers before him, which he was in the act of opening, and which I recognised to be some state papers—communications from the supreme council, such as I had seen in my uncle's charge during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth! I asked him, in amazement, what he was about? "The empress has ordered that I should open them," was his answer. "That is impossible," I replied; "she cannot mean them to be opened until she appoints persons officially to attend to their contents, and for this task, I am sure, neither you nor I can consider ourselves qualified."

Just at this moment we were interrupted by a report that the soldiers about the palace, from extreme thirst and the lengthened fatigues of the day, had broken into the cellars, and were emptying casks of Hungary wine, believing it to be a sort of hydromel, the common beverage of the country. I immediately went out to expostulate with them on this breach of good order; and to my great satisfaction, as well as surprise,—for at this moment of disorder the authority of their officers was entirely disregarded,—my harangue was attended with such happy effects, that, throwing all the wine on the ground which remained in their hats, they rolled the hogsheads back into their places, and were contented to slake their thirst at the nearest spring. I

made them a present of whatever money I had in my pockets, and these I turned inside out, to shew that my inclination to gratify them in this respect was at least equal to my capacity; promising, at the same time, that, on our arrival in town, the taverns should be thrown open, and that they should drink as much as they pleased at the expense of the crown. This was a species of rhetoric extremely to their taste, and with this they dispersed in the utmost good humour.

The mention of this circumstance reminds me of what I have read in some publications, that I received money from the empress and from foreign courts, in aid of our revolutionary objects—an assertion which I shall take this opportunity of contradicting. I neither asked, nor did I receive a single rouble from her majesty; and though many overtures of unbounded credit were made me on the part of the French minister, my answer always was, that, with my consent, no foreign resources should ever be employed to bring about our revolution.

As I passed, on my way to the empress, through the same chamber where Gregory Orloff was lying on the sofa, I observed, without pretending to do so, a table laid with three covers. Dinner was presently announced, when her majesty invited me to accompany her in, and partake of it. On entering the room, I perceived, with extreme disapprobation, the table drawn towards the couch where Orloff lay. This feeling was so strongly marked on my counte-

nance, that her majesty perhaps remarked it, when she asked if anything was the matter. "Nothing," I replied, "but the loss of sleep for fifteen nights, and extreme fatigue."

She then tried to engage me on her side in a sort of remonstrance with Orloff, who had desired leave to quit the military service. "Only conceive," said she "what an air of ingratitude it would have were I to permit him to retire." My answer, I believe, did not exactly accord with her expectations, for I merely observed, that, as sovereign, having so many means of bestowing recompence, there was no need to do any violence to his wishes.

A conviction now, for the first time, forced itself on my mind, fraught with every idea which was painful and humiliating. It was evident that there was a *liason* between them.

After our repast, and the departure of Peter the Third, we set off for Petersburg, and on our way, rested two hours at a country-house belonging to Prince Kourakin, where the empress and I again reposed for a time on the only bed it afforded. Thence we moved on to Katerinhoff, our approach to which was greeted by an innumerable concourse of people, who came to range themselves on our side in case of an action with the Holstein guards, a body of foreigners most unpopular and obnoxious throughout the nation.

But how to describe and do justice to the scene which followed is beyond my power. As we entered

the capital, and moved along in triumphal procession, every street and every window was thronged with spectators, whose voices rent the air in imploring blessings on the empress; whilst the music of all the military bands, and peals of bells ringing from all the churches, increased the joyous tumult which accompanied the cavalcade. The doors of all these sacred edifices were thrown open; and through the deep perspective, groups of priests were seen at their illuminated altars, ready to consecrate the public joy with all the ceremonies of religion.

Animated and imposing as was the scene around me, of which I can give but a faint idea, it was almost eclipsed by the vivacity of my own thoughts, as, full of enthusiasm and devotedness, I rode by the side of the empress, reflecting on the blessings of a revolution unstained by a single drop of blood; while, at the same moment, I contemplated, in this gift of Heaven, not only a beneficent sovereign, but an idolized friend, whom the success of my own exertions had contributed to rescue from a perilous state of dependency, and to place on the throne of my beloved country.

On arriving at the vestibule of the summer palace, my spirits exhausted by the rapid succession of events, and anxious to learn their effects on my father and uncle, as well as to see my child, I requested her majesty's permission to use for this purpose her travelling carriage, which followed us;

and having obtained it, with the injunction that I should return as soon as possible, I first drove to my uncle's house, which happened to be the nearest. I found this truly respectable man perfectly himself,—that is, calm and dignified as ever. He spoke of the dethronement of Peter the Third as an event which he had expected; but his conversation chiefly turned on the danger of placing a too sanguine trust in the friendship of sovereigns, which were, on many accounts, he observed, as little likely to be lasting as sincere. He spoke, he assured me, from his own experience, which proved that the purest motives and most upright conduct were no preservatives against the poisonous effects of envy and intrigue, even under a sovereign who was grateful for his services, and to whom he had been devoted from his earliest years.

From this excellent uncle I drove to my father's house, which, to my great surprise, I found occupied by a party of a hundred soldiers. This circumstance originated in the mistaken zeal of a M. Kakavinsky, who had been sent there to protect it against any drunken attacks of the guards, whose barracks were in the immediate neighbourhood; but from some apprehensions on account of my father's numerous retinue of servants, this officer had on his own authority called in all these soldiers to his aid, knowing at the same time that no more had been left in the city when the empress went to Peterhoff than was absolutely necessary for the palace and

the grand duke's guard. A person had just arrived before me, whom I recognised to be an orderly sergeant of M. Vadkoffsky, lieutenant-colonel of the guards, who had been left in command of the troops in Petersburg, to demand thirty of these men for the relief of the other parties who had been on duty, in consequence of Kakavinsky's folly, double the usual length of time. I exhorted him therefore immediately to comply with this order; and as I passed through the house, finding a sentinel at the door of every room, I gave him very plainly to understand how much he had mistaken her majesty's instructions, which had placed him there to be of use to my father, and not to guard him like one suspected of treason: then turning to the soldiers, I told them they had been very unnecessarily tormented, and if ten or twelve remained it would be quite sufficient until further orders were given.

My father received me without any expression of anger or disapprobation. He spoke of his chagrin at the circumstance I have just mentioned, and the little satisfaction he felt in finding my sister, the Countess Elizabeth, under his roof. To set him at ease on the former point, I assured him that his present restraint entirely arose from the folly of Kakavinsky in misconceiving his orders, and that every soldier would be removed before night. With regard to the latter, I conjured him to reflect on the critical situation of my sister, which rendered his house at this moment her only respectable, as it

was her only natural asylum. In a short time, added I, the protection you at present afford will cease to be necessary; and then, if it be your mutual wish, you may separate without the least offence to decency.

My visit to my father, as well as that to my uncle, was necessarily short, as I had promised to return speedily to the empress, and had yet to go home to see my daughter, and to lay aside my military dress. My father very unwillingly suffered me to leave him; and it was not without difficulty that I gained his permission to see my sister before I left the house. He had never shewn much partiality towards her, and his feelings in this respect, whatever they might be, were certainly not improved by her total disregard of him ever since the first few weeks of the late reign, and the neglect he had in consequence experienced from the rest of the court.

As soon as I entered my sister's chamber, she began bitterly to bewail the disasters of the day, and her own misfortunes. With regard to any personal apprehensions, I entreated her to dismiss all anxiety; and though she might rest assured of my affection and solicitude to serve her, such I begged her to believe was her majesty's nobleness and generosity of nature, that it would, without any appeal on my part, be exercised in her behalf. On this point my persuasion was well founded; for although the empress judged her absence necessary during the period of her coronation, she frequently sent messages to

her, with assurances of her protection. My sister soon retired to a country place of my father's in the neighbourhood of Moscow; and after the coronation and the departure of the court, removed to that city, where she lived until her marriage with M. Paliansky, when she took up her residence with him in Petersburg. On the birth of her eldest son, the empress stood godmother in person; and many years afterwards, her daughter, at my request, was nominated a maid of honour.

Having left my sister, I hastened home to embrace my little Nastasia. These three visits took up so much time that I would not delay my return to the palace by waiting to change my dress. As I was going out, my maid stopped me to say, that in the pocket of the robe I had thrown off she had found a red ribbon and diamond badge. It was that of St. Catherine, I recollected, belonging to the empress; I took it therefore to return to her.

As I entered the antechamber leading to her majesty's apartment, I perceived Gregory Orloff and Kakavinsky coming out of it. The moment I saw the empress, it was sufficiently clear that Orloff was my enemy, as no one but himself could have introduced this latter into her presence. She upbraided me with having spoken French to this officer, before the soldiers whom I wished to dismiss from their posts. My answer was short, and was accompanied with an expression of countenance which shewed the sort of feeling such a reception occasioned.

"Many hours," said I, "have not elapsed since your majesty has ascended the throne, and such in this short period are the proofs of confidence I have received from your soldiers that what I say cannot yet give offence to them, in whatever language it may be spoken." And to put an end to any further conversation, I delivered to her the red ribbon which I had brought. "Softly," said she; "surely you must acknowledge that it was not right in you to dismiss the soldiers from their posts." "True," replied I; "in spite of the request of M. Vadkoffsky, I ought to have permitted that blockhead Kakavinsky to do what he liked, and leave your majesty without a relief of guard for the security of the palace." "Come, come," said she, "enough has passed; what I have said was for your hastiness, but this is for your services," throwing the ribbon of St. Catherine over my shoulder. Instead of receiving it on my knees, I replied: "Your majesty must pardon me in saying that the time is almost come, when truth must necessarily be banished from your presence; yet let me entreat that I may not receive this decoration, which as an ornament I do not prize, and which as a recompence is of no value to one whose services, however estimated in the eyes of some people, never were, and never can be purchased." She embraced me affectionately, saying, "At least friendship has some rights, and may I not be allowed in this instance to share its pleasures." I kissed her hand in acknowledgment.

So here I was, dressed in uniform, with the red ribbon across my shoulder without its star, a spur upon one heel, and looking like a boy of fifteen years of age.

Her majesty then told me that by her orders a lieutenant of the guards had already been despatched to Prince Daschkaw, to desire his return to Petersburg as expeditiously as possible. Such a proof of her consideration, and at such a moment, so transported me with delight that my vexation was instantly forgotten. Directions, she said, were also given to prepare apartments for us in the palace, which would be ready next day for my reception; but these I begged leave to decline accepting for the present, that on my husband's arrival we might take possession of them together.

In about an hour after, when every one took their leave, I hastened home, and having shared my little Nastasia's supper, hurried into bed; but after an agitation of spirits such as I had experienced, and over-exertion both of mind and body, unable to compose myself to any sound sleep, I passed the night in feverish slumbers, disturbed by a rambling fancy and nervous startings.

I forgot to mention in its place a little conversation with the empress, on our return from Peterhoff to town, when her majesty, Count Razoumoffsky, Prince Wolchonsky, and myself, having alighted from our horses, got into a carriage, and thus proceeded for awhile to rest ourselves. The

empress, in her own peculiar tone of kindness, turned to me, and said, "What can I ever do to testify the sense I have of your services?" "Enough," said I, "to make me the happiest of mortals; be a mother to my country, and let me still live in your friendship." "All that," said she, "is merely my duty; but I want to diminish this weight of gratitude which I feel." "I was in hopes," replied I, "that offices of friendship could never be felt as a burden." "Well, well," said she, embracing me, "you may tax me with what you please, but I shall never be at rest till you tell me, and I must this very instant know, what I can do to give you pleasure." "Well then," said I, "your majesty can produce a resurrection on my uncle, who is alive and well." "What in the world can this enigma mean?" said she.

I was confounded at having been tempted to ask a favour, and therefore requested she would find out its solution from Prince Wolchonsky. "I believe," said he, "Princess Daschkaw alludes to General Levontieff, uncle to her husband, who served with distinction against Prussia, and who has lost the seventh part of his landed possessions, as well as the fourth part of his other property, through the intrigues of his wife, who, according to law, was entitled to no part of either until after his natural demise." The empress, aware of the late emperor's readiness to assist in the ruin of those officers who had zealously served against the King of Prussia,

perceived the injustice of the case, and promised redress. "To produce his resurrection, then," said her majesty, "shall be the object of one of the first ukases I sign." "I shall be highly recompensed by your majesty's doing so," said I, "as General Levontieff is the only brother and very dear friend of Princess Daschkaw, my mother-in-law." And rejoiced I really was at any opportunity of shewing kindness to my husband's family, especially at such a moment, when by doing so I escaped the necessity of accepting a personal favour, which would have been absolutely repugnant to my principles.

The following day, M. Panin received the title of count, with the pension of 5000 roubles; Prince Wolchonsky and Count Razoumoffsky the same pension; the rest of the conspirators of the first class 600 peasants each, and 2000 roubles pension, or, instead of peasants, 24,000 roubles. To my great surprise I found my name in this list, but I was resolved not to profit either by the choice or gift; for which disinterestedness I received the reproaches of all those who were concerned in the revolution. My friends, however, soon assumed another tone; and at length, to put a stop to the general clamour, and not to offend the empress, I agreed to a compromise. I had a catalogue drawn out of all my husband's debts, amounting nearly to 24,000 roubles; and to his creditors I transferred the power of receiving this sum from the cabinet of her majesty.

The fourth day after the revolution, M. Betskoy solicited a moment's audience, which was granted. I happened to be in the room alone with her majesty when he entered, and, to our mutual astonishment, he threw himself on his knees, conjuring her to confess to whose influence she attributed her ascension to the throne. "I owe my elevation to God Almighty," she replied, "and to the election of my subjects." "Then," said he, in despair, "it is no longer just that I should preserve this distinction;" and he would have torn from his shoulder the ribbon of Saint Alexander, with which he was decorated, had not the empress, entreating him to desist, asked what he could possibly mean. "I am the most unfortunate of men," replied he, "since your majesty does not acknowledge in me the only person to whom you owe your crown. Was it not I who influenced the guards? was it not I who scattered money amongst the people?"

We both thought he had lost his senses, and were beginning to feel some alarms, when the empress, with her usual address, hit upon a comical expedient for getting rid of his extravagant persecution, and gratifying his vanity to the highest degree. "I acknowledge," said she, gravely interrupting his harangue, "the full extent of my obligations; and since it is to your services I owe my crown, to whose care can I so properly commit the arrangement of that which I am to wear at my coronation? To your direction, therefore, I entrust this matter;

and under your jurisdiction I place all the jewellers of my empire."

M. Betskoy rose in a transport of delight, and, after a thousand acknowledgments, hastened out of the room, eager, perhaps, to spread the report of his having received a recompence equal to his merit. It is needless to say how heartily we laughed at this circumstance, which is as characteristic of the ingenious address and cleverness of the empress as of the extravagant folly of Betskoy.

CHAPTER VII.

New state of things at the court of the empress—Singular anecdotes of the Empress Anne—The celebrated Count Bestoucheff returns from exile—His introduction to the Princess Daschkaw by the empress—Incorrectness of the French accounts of the Revolution—Field-Marshal Munich and M. Leshtock — Tragic death of Peter the Third — The empress's feeling on the occasion—Her innocence of all share in the catastrophe—Proofs to this effect—Letter of Alexis Orloff, written immediately after the murder—Return of Prince Daschkaw—His appointment to the empress's own regiment of cuirassiers—His popularity in the army—Personal recollections of the Empress Catherine—Anecdotes of her—Her extraordinary versatility of mind—Affair of Michael Pouschkin—His baseness and ingratitude to the princess—The close of his career.

At this moment the court of Petersburg was full of peculiar interest; new characters were drawn into notice by the revolution, and several illustrious exiles of the time of the Empress Anne,* of

* The name of the Empress Anne recalls some curious anecdotes, which the editor received from the lips of the princess, relative to that sovereign, which may not be deemed unworthy of insertion here.

It is well known that, during the reign of Peter the First, it was the custom of that tyrant to punish those nobles who of-

the regency of Biron, and of the reign of Elizabeth, recalled under an order of Peter the Third, were daily arriving. Many of these, who had figured in the first offices of state, and possessed the secrets of former reigns, whose misfortunes were associated with the recollection of times long since passed, and rendered each a source of curiosity as well as of instruction, were now, after years of obscurity and political non-existence, suddenly called forth into light and notice.

fended him, by an imperial order that they should become *fools*; from which moment the unfortunate victim, however endowed with intellect, instantly became the laughing-stock of the whole court; he had the privilege of saying everything he chose, at the peril, however, of being kicked or horsewhipped, without daring to offer any sort of retaliation; everything he did was ridiculed, his complaints treated as jests, and his sarcasms sneered at and commented on, as marvellous proofs of understanding in a fool. The Empress Anne surpassed this abominable cruelty, but sometimes mingled in her practices so much of oddity that it was impossible not to be entertained. Once she decreed that a certain Prince G—— should become *a hen*, to punish him for some trifling misdemeanor; and for this purpose she ordered a large basket, stuffed with straw, and hollowed into a nest, with a quantity of eggs inside, to be placed conspicuously in one of the principal rooms at court. The prince was condemned, on pain of death, to sit upon this nest, and render himself to the last degree ridiculous by imitating the cackling of a hen.

This same empress was very fond of the Countess Tchernicheff, and frequently ordered her into her presence, to divert her by her amusing conversation. This poor lady became, however, exceedingly unwell, and her legs swelled so violently as to make it quite a martyrdom for her to stand. The empress, never conceiving the possibility of a subject being tired in the presence of her sovereign, and not wishing to deprive herself of

At length the ci-devant grand-chancellor, Bestoucheff, made his appearance. I was presented to him in the most particular manner by the empress, who designated me with such expressions as put the Orloffs to the torture: "This is the young Princess Daschkaw," said she; "would you have imagined that it was to the daughter of Count Robert Worontzow that I am indebted for the throne?"

I had never seen Bestoucheff except for an instant, four years before, when at a distance in a crowd. I was struck with the intelligence of his countenance,

the entertainment she experienced in her society, for a long time saw her suffering before her eyes, without offering the slightest relief. One day, however, perceiving her ready to faint, and vainly trying to support herself, first on one foot and then on the other, yet still forcing her spirits into gaiety, the empress took compassion on her poor favourite, and said, "Thou mayst lean upon that table, and Anna Ivanovna (her majesty's chief attendant) shall stand before thee, and screen thee from me, so that I may not see thy attitude."

On another occasion this empress expressed a great curiosity to see the Russian dance, and ordered four of the principal beauties of St. Petersburg to perform it in her presence. The Princess Daschkaw's mother, then in her zenith, and famous for her grace in dancing, made one in this group; but whatever their sense of such an imperial honour might have been, in distinguishing them above their fellows, they were nevertheless so intimidated, and trembled to such an excess at the severe glance of the empress, that, losing all presence of mind, they forgot the figure of the dance, and, amidst the general confusion and dismay, were suddenly electrified by the approach of her majesty, who had risen from her seat in a rage, and advancing towards them with the utmost dignity, gave each a sound box on her ear, commanding them instantly to begin over again, which they did, more dead than alive.

or rather the keen falseness of its expression, and, on inquiry, heard for the first time the name of that celebrated character. I mention this circumstance, as in some accounts of the revolution I have been accused of having conspired with him against Peter the Third, although I was not fourteen years old at the time of his banishment. Such, indeed, is the disregard of truth, and ignorance of facts, observable in the works of several of the French writers, that it would appear as if they conspired to rob history of all its value and instruction, by filling their pages with senseless calumny and unamusing falsehoods.

Two other no less remarkable men were amongst the apparitions of this general resurrection—Field-Marshal Munich and M. Leshtock. I recollected having seen them in my childhood at my uncle's, who was exceedingly attached to both. The former, at this time eighty-four years of age, was distinguished by a courteous air of chivalry, which was not a little set off by the coarser manners of several of our conspirators. He had lost nothing of his characteristic firmness of mind, and was still in full possession of all his faculties. His conversation was interesting to me in the highest degree, and I feel proud in the remembrance that through his kindness and partiality I had every opportunity of enjoying it. I considered both these men as animated chronicles of former times; and in reflecting on this twofold world of the past and present, my un-

derstanding acquired enlargement, although my inexperience still deceived me with the youthful hope of finding in every human heart a temple sacred to all the virtues.

But amidst speculations which these interesting events excited, my thoughts were suddenly turned to a dreadful reality, which petrified me with consternation and horror: I allude to the tragic end of Peter the Third! I was so shocked at the news of this catastrophe, so indignant at such a winding up of this glorious revolution, that although I spurned the idea of the empress being in any degree an accomplice in the crime of Alexis Orloff, I could not bring myself to enter the palace until the following day. I then found the empress with a dejected air, visibly labouring under much uneasiness of mind. These were her words when she addressed me: "My horror at this death is inexpressible; it is a blow which strikes me to the earth." "It is a death too sudden, madam," replied I, "for your glory, and for mine."

No other subject dwelt upon my thoughts, and I had what was called imprudence enough to say, in the course of the evening, while speaking in the antechamber before a number of persons, that I trusted Alexis Orloff would feel now more than ever that we were not formed to breathe even the same atmosphere together, and that I had pride enough to believe he would not dare in future to approach me, even as an acquaintance. From this day all

the Orloffs became my implacable enemies; and as for Alexis, in spite of his natural insolence, I must do him the justice to say, that twenty years afterwards elapsed, without his once presuming to address a word to me on any occasion.

Whoever has the wickedness to suspect the empress of having directed, or even connived at, the murder of her husband, will find an absolute proof of the injustice of these suspicions in a letter still existing, which she received from Alexis Orloff, written in his own hand, a few moments after the horrible deed had been perpetrated. Its style and incoherence mark strongly, in spite of his drunkenness, the terror and wildness of his apprehensions, while he solicits pardon for the act in the most supplicatory language.

This important letter was preserved with great care by Catherine the Second, amongst other documents of consequence, in a casket, which at her death, by order of Paul, her successor, Prince Besborodka was appointed to examine, and to read the papers it contained in his presence. When he had finished reading this letter of Alexis Orloff, Paul, making the sign of the cross, exclaimed, "God be praised! the few doubts I had on this subject relative to my mother are now dissipated. The empress and Mdlle. Nelidoff were present; and it was commanded by the emperor that it should be read also to the grand dukes and to Count Rostoptschin.

To those who reverenced the name of Catherine the Second, nothing could be more consolatory than such a discovery; and though proofs were never wanting for my own conviction, no circumstance of my life ever afforded me more lively satisfaction than the certainty of an existing document like this, which would for ever silence a most foul calumny on the fame of a sovereign who, amidst all her frailties, was incapable of conceiving even the shadow of such a crime.

The joy I felt on the arrival of Prince Daschkaw is not to be described; it seemed like the renewal of my existence after such an eventful period, worn out as I was with never-ceasing agitation and fatigue, both of body and mind. Her majesty almost immediately celebrated his return, by an act peculiarly flattering and gratifying to the prince, in appointing him to the command of a regiment of cuirassiers, of which she herself was colonel.

This regiment, which, under the Empress Elizabeth as well as Peter the Third, had ranked as first regiment of body-guards, was officered almost exclusively by Germans. The nomination, therefore, of a Russian to the head of it, could not fail to be satisfactory to the army in general; and so popular was the prince with both officers and men in his management of the corps, that it soon grew into credit with the young Russian nobles, who eagerly sought commissions in it; and as the prince spared no expense in the horses and accoutrements, it soon

became the finest and best-appointed regiment in the service.

Prince Daschkaw and I immediately removed to the apartments which the empress had destined for us in the palace. We dined with her every day, and as she never partook of anything after dinner, supper was served up in our own rooms, where we usually invited ten or twelve of our acquaintance every evening.

As the days of my illusions respecting the friendship of sovereigns are about to cease, I may be allowed to dwell a moment longer on the recollection of those hours of intimacy which the fascinating powers of the empress could often diversify with the sportiveness of childhood itself.

I was enthusiastically fond of music, but she was far from being so; and Prince Daschkaw, though with some taste for it, was as little of a performer as the empress. She was nevertheless fond of hearing me sing, and sometimes, when I had done, secretly passing a sign across to Prince Daschkaw, she would gravely propose a duet, which she used to call the music of the spheres, and which, without either of them knowing how to sing a note, they both performed in concert. A sudden burst of the most exalted and ridiculously discordant tones was the consequence,—one seconding the other, with scientific shrugs, and all the solemn self-complacent airs and grimaces of musicians. From this, perhaps, she passed to the cat concert, and imitated the

purring of poor puss, in the most droll and ludicrous manner, always taking care to add appropriate half comic, half sentimental words, which she invented for the occasion; or else, spitting like a cat in a passion, with her back up, she suddenly boxed the first person in her way, making up her hand into a paw, and mewing so outrageously that instead of the great Catherine, nothing but the wrongs of a grimalkin remained upon one's mind.

I really believe there never was any one in the world, and certainly never any sovereign, who equalled her in the magic versatility of her mind, the exhaustless variety of her resources, and above all, the enchantment of her manner, that in itself could give a lustre to the commonest words and most trifling matters.

As this memoir, in which the actions of my life are faintly sketched, should be the mirror also of that mind which influenced them, I must not omit to relate how, in another instance besides the one I have mentioned, I experienced some show of displeasure from her majesty, to which much importance was attached, and which gave rise to many malevolent surmises at the moment. But in this, as in any similar instance, I will, without the least reserve, disclose all I know; and thus, whatever may have been written by those who had no other authority for their assertions than the reports of the day, it will appear that I never fell into disgrace with her majesty. And as to the small pecuniary re-

compence I received for my services, which has been adduced as a proof to the contrary, let it be remembered that the empress knew me thoroughly, and knew that self-interest had no power over a single feeling of my heart. So little, indeed, was I influenced by such considerations, that in spite of the contagious selfishness of a court which sometimes converted into enemies those to whom I had rendered important services, and the ample experience of human ingratitude which I have had through every stage of life, I will, without any false modesty, declare that I have ever continued ready, when the occasion offered, to make the largest sacrifices from my own means, for a long time extremely scanty, for the benefit of others.

Amongst those instances of ingratitude at which I felt most hurt was the conduct of a young man named Michael Pouschkin, which, as it occasioned the momentary displeasure on the part of the empress to which I have alluded, I will relate at large.

This young man, whose father had been in some employment under government, and had lost his place from misconduct, was a lieutenant in the same regiment of guards with Prince Daschkaw, who frequently lent him money to relieve him from pecuniary difficulties. His cleverness and talents in conversation made his society desired by all the young people of the day; and this, added to the habits of familiarity between brother officers, induced Prince Daschkaw, without reflection, to look

upon him as a friend. At the request of the prince just before our marriage, I assisted in rescuing him from a very awkward and disgraceful affair in which he had involved himself with M. Heinber, the principal French banker in Petersburg. Pouschkin, instead of repaying some money he owed the latter, had him turned from the door, and kicked out of his house. After such an outrage and injustice, a suit at law was immediately instituted against Pouschkin, in which M. Heinber was warmly supported by the Marquis de l'Hôpital, the French ambassador. As I saw the marquis constantly at my uncle's, I made interest through him to put a stop to the proceeding, and obtained his further mediation in writing a note to Prince Menchikoff, Pouschkin's commanding officer, to inform him that the affair with M. Heinber had been amicably adjusted, and therefore to request no further notice should be taken of it.

This young man's advancement was still so much an object of our exertions, that one day during the reign of Peter, when the empress was speaking to me of her son and of M. Panin's proposal to place about his person as companions some accomplished young men, especially such as were well instructed in languages and foreign literature, I did not hesitate to name to her majesty Michael Pouschkin, as one in many respects well qualified for such a situation. A few weeks after this, Pouschkin got into a scrape of a very scandalous nature, and though I did not much like the young man myself, yet, at the

instigation of my husband, I interested the empress in his behalf, and effectually succeeded in extricating him from its disgraceful consequences.

Soon after this circumstance, a few weeks before her majesty's accession to the throne, I was with her one evening at Peterhoff, when M. Panin brought her son, the grand duke, to see her; and in the course of the evening, making some observations on the excessive timidity, and even uncouthness, of the young prince, which he attributed to his retired habits and exclusion from all intercourse with people of his own age, he again mentioned the idea of giving him some fit companions, and named several, among which was Pouschkin, whom Prince Daschkaw, before he left Petersburg, had recommended to his uncle for this purpose.

On hearing this name, her majesty immediately observed, that however she might wish to believe the late imputation on M. Pouschkin's character unfounded, yet such was the publicity of the affair in which he was involved, that if the least suspicion in this instance attached to his conduct, it must utterly disqualify him for the purpose in question.

I could not but cordially approve of her objection; and having reminded her that our recommendation had been given long before the discredit of this circumstance, I nevertheless entreated her to reflect that he might have been falsely accused, and how hard it would be, were he to lose all hope and prospect of turning his talents to account, on no

stronger evidence of misconduct than mere suspicion.

These were the sort of obligations Prince Daschkaw and I conferred on M. Pouschkin, and in what follows will be seen the return he made.

When the empress was on the throne, and we were inhabitants of the palace, Pouschkin called one day, and appeared so unusually out of spirits that I could not help remarking it, and inquiring the cause. He spoke of the gloomy prospect of his affairs, which grew, he said, worse and worse, and, notwithstanding my promise to assist him, he had lost all hopes of being placed about the grand duke's person. I said everything that good-nature could dictate, to brighten his views, assuring him that although he had better not fix his heart on this particular situation, there was no reason for despondency, as her majesty might think him better qualified for some other, and that my exertions in his favour should not be relaxed. After thus doing my best to console and give him hope, I had at least reason to expect that he would consider the part I took as kind, rather than otherwise: but what was the consequence? He had not left me five minutes when he met M. Zinovieff, to whom, with the same melancholy face, he related his misfortunes, arising, as he said, from the mortifying information he had just received from me, of her majesty's belief in the scandal circulated against

him, and that she had in consequence declared him unfit to be a companion to her son. Zinovieff offered to take him immediately to Gregory Orloff, with whom he was very intimate. The offer was eagerly accepted, and Pouschkin was introduced as one who stood in the utmost need of the favourite's protection. Orloff having asked what was the matter, Pouschkin, with all the eloquence of which he was master, told his story, as he had done before to Zinovieff; when Orloff, guessing him to be one whom he could easily lure to his purpose, in order to calumniate me, espoused his cause, and promised him such success as would prove how little her majesty thought of him in the manner I had represented.

Late that evening, a letter was delivered to Prince Daschkaw; and what was our astonishment on finding it was from this same Pouschkin, written as a sort of apology for having been beguiled by Zinovieff to Orloff's house, where a conversation passed, he hardly remembered what, that might nevertheless be productive of some disagreeable consequences to me. Feeling, therefore, the innumerable obligations he was under to us both, he looked upon it as an act of justice to disavow all that he had said to Orloff, and declared his readiness to prepare a written testimonial to this effect, which the prince might send for the next morning.

I felt so much contempt at the meanness of this

proposal that I thought it best not to notice it. Prince Daschkaw, however, fancied it would be harsh to refuse him these means of justification.

The next morning, when, according to custom, I paid my respects to the empress, this subject was instantly introduced. "For what purpose could I," she asked, "think of estranging the confidence of a subject by insinuations that he had lost her good opinion? and why should I thus cause so much unhappiness to M. Pouschkin?"

Astonished at such an accusation, and indignant at the ingratitude which had occasioned it, I could with difficulty restrain my feelings. I contented myself, however, with replying, that as the anxiety I had often testified to be of service to this young man was well known to her majesty, I need only leave to her own judgment the condemnation of his baseness; but to a being enlightened and benevolent like herself, I could not help asking how it was possible that the language of consolation, which was all I had been guilty of in the present instance, could be tortured into a subject of reproof. As to estranging the confidence of her subject, so far from such an idea, I had dwelt with much pleasure on the persuasion that although the young man might fail in obtaining the appointment in question, he might still receive some proof of her majesty's favour, and be able to exercise his talents to the advantage of her government.

Thus ended our conversation; and with this ex-

planation I believe her majesty was satisfied, although I was sensibly piqued and hurt at a reproach so hasty and unmerited.

The moment I saw my husband, "Your judgment," said he, "was better than mine, respecting that rascal, Pouschkin; my valet-de-chambre has just been to his house as he requested, and he has had the meanness to refuse the paper he promised, apprehensive of the dangers which might result from a confession written under his own hand."

"We have now," said I, "only to forget this false, insidious fellow, who never was worthy of your esteem."

His future conduct in life justified this opinion, and corresponded with the baseness of character which was exhibited in this instance; for, having been placed at the head of the College of Manufactures, through the favour of the Orloffs, the only use he made of so distinguished a proof of confidence was to forge bank notes, a crime which was followed by his exile into Siberia, where he ended his days.

CHAPTER VIII.

Coronation of the empress—Journey to Moscow—Death of Princess Daschkaw's child—Her treatment by the Orloffs—Attempted humiliation of the princess—Her appointment of lady of honour to the empress—A domestic affliction—Death of Princess Nastasia—Intrigue of the Orloffs to induce the empress to marry—Defeated by the firmness of the grand chancellor—Conduct of the empress on the occasion—Orloff created a prince of the German empire—Arrest of M. Hetroff—His firmness in opposing the empress's marriage with Orloff—Birth of the Princess Daschkaw's son—Extraordinary letter to Prince Daschkaw from the empress—The prince's conduct on the occasion—Alarming illness of the princess—The empress and the Grand Duke Paul stand sponsors to the princess's child—Return of the court to Petersburg.

I RETURN now to more public affairs. The coronation of the empress was at this time the subject of every one's attention; and in the month of September the court set out for Moscow. I accompanied her majesty in her carriage throughout the journey, and Prince Daschkaw was also in her suite. The expressions of joy which greeted her approach to every town and village on her way could not be otherwise than highly gratifying.

Within a few miles of Moscow, we stopped at Petroffsky, a country place belonging to Count Razoumoffsky, where the public functionaries were assembled, and crowds of people from the city, awaiting the arrival of her majesty.

Prince Daschkaw lost no time in paying a visit to his mother, and did not return to us until the following morning; and as I could then no longer contain my impatience to embrace my little Michael, whom I had left the year before under my mother-in-law's care, I begged the empress to allow me this indulgence, and to absent myself from her until the evening. She said everything she could think of to dissuade me from going, reminding me of the fatigue I had suffered, and the necessity of some repose; still, however, I could not be induced to delay my intention longer than the afternoon. After dinner, therefore, when I was ready to go, her majesty called Prince Daschkaw and me into another room, and with the utmost caution and tenderness informed me that my child, my little Michael, was dead!

This event afflicted me to such a degree as rendered me unfit for anything but the indulgence of my sorrow. I flew to the house where he had died; nor could I either return to Petroffsky or remove to take possession of the apartments prepared for me at the palace. Neither my spirits nor inclinations would have supported me through the ceremonies of the grand entry into Moscow; and

although I visited the empress every day after her arrival, I avoided all the public entertainments which were given on the occasion, and continued to reside at the house of the old Princess Daschkaw, in whose sympathy and indulgence I found a melancholy consolation.

This was one of the moments, however, when the Orloffs, with their usual ingenuity, sought the means of humbling me. They conducted the public ceremonials of the coronation; and as Peter the First had adopted the German etiquette, which gave military rank the exclusive distinction, they delighted themselves in contemplating my public exhibition, not as the friend and attendant of the empress,—for though decorated with the order of St. Catherine it gave no precedence,—but as the wife of a colonel, the very lowest rank admitted into the cathedral during this ceremony.

A scaffolding was erected within the church for spectators of this class, which rendered each person sufficiently conspicuous to give full scope to their project against me. All my friends were therefore anxious to dissuade me from making my appearance. I thanked them for their wishes; but it was in assuring them that if I could permit a selfish consideration to sway me at a moment such as this, when all my views of friendship and of patriotism were about to be realized, that very pride which my enemies wished to mortify would uphold me amidst the multitude, as one who gave to,

rather than received dignity from, any external circumstances. Alas! who could balance the senselessness of etiquette at such a moment!

With what different feelings from those of personal precedence did I hail the 22nd of September, the day of coronation! At an early hour I entered the empress's apartments; and as the grand duke's indisposition deprived her of his attendance, I followed next in procession to the cathedral, and took my humble post amongst those unknown individuals whose military rank, as well as mine, would not allow a better. Perhaps the sentiment which filled my mind was not comprehended by those who classed my feelings by the army list of the year's calendar; but young as I then was, my criterion of right and wrong was that to which I have referred every succeeding action; and if I am a stranger to the sense of humiliation, it is because I comprehend it only as applied to the self-degradation of one's own character.

When the ceremony of the coronation was at an end, the empress returned to the palace, and seated herself under the imperial canopy.

An extensive promotion took place; and amongst her first nominations to public offices, Prince Daschkaw was appointed a gentleman of the chamber; which, in giving him the rank of brigadier, did not deprive him of his regiment; and I was appointed lady of honour to her majesty.

Moscow now presented an uninterrupted gala.

The public satisfaction appeared complete, and nearly the whole winter passed away in festivity and rejoicing. Not so with us; a domestic affliction precluded us from any share in these joyous proceedings. My husband's youngest sister, Princess Nastasia, was taken ill; and notwithstanding a very strong constitution, which served only to protract her sufferings, she at length fell a victim to the ignorance of her physician. The painful interest I felt in this amiable young woman, who, during the last stage of her illness, would scarcely suffer me to quit her night or day, added to my own state of health, which had long been delicate, and being now far advanced in pregnancy, rendered me so wholly unfit for society that I avoided the sight of every one unconcerned in this melancholy scene. Prince Daschkaw, too, between his attentions to an afflicted mother and a dying sister, whom he tenderly loved, had neither leisure nor inclination to go into public, and being as little disposed to the interruption of visitors as myself, gave orders that none should be admitted but our nearest relations.

The court proceedings, therefore, at that juncture, were but little known to us, except such of general notoriety as the story of Bestoucheff's petition to her majesty on the subject of a second marriage.

This piece of quackery, which was cast in the shape of a national address, praying her majesty to gratify the anxious wishes of her loving subjects in choosing a consort worthy of her imperial hand, was

counteracted and exposed by the loyal and manly conduct of my uncle, the grand chancellor. When Bestoucheff brought him the address, signed by several of the principal nobility, my uncle implored him not to disturb the little ease he could now enjoy by even naming a project so fraught with folly and with danger. Bestoucheff, however, proceeding to read his paper, my uncle rose from his seat, and indignantly protesting against the madness of such a petition, quitted the room.

The grand chancellor immediately ordered his carriage, and, ill as he was, drove to the palace, resolved not to lose a moment in presenting himself before the empress, and expostulating against a proposal which he well knew to be instigated by Gregory Orloff, and founded on his own presumptuous expectations. He demanded an audience, which was instantly granted. He came, he said, into the presence of her majesty in consequence of an extraordinary overture from Count Bestoucheff, who, by an incoherent paper of his own fabrication, wished to impress her with a belief that the nation solicited for her and for itself a master. Such a notion, he continued, was an outrage on the sense of her majesty's subjects, who would feel, he had no doubt, as well as himself, the various reasons against, rather than in favour of, a marriage which would give her such a husband, and the nation such a master, as Gregory Orloff.

The empress answered him in the following

words:—" I never authorized that intriguing old man to do what he has done; and as to yourself, I discover in the frankness and loyalty of your conduct too much attachment to my person ever to mistake its motive."

My uncle declared, in reply, that he had acted only as duty prompted him, and that her majesty's reflection and judgment could alone avert a circumstance so obnoxious and alarming. He then took his leave.

This firmness on the part of the grand chancellor, whilst it attracted general admiration, and added to the respect his popular qualities had acquired him, was nevertheless attributed by M. Bestoucheff to a previous understanding with the empress, and her having concerted with him the part he was to act, in order to rid herself of Orloff's importunities. This was, however, a suspicion without the least foundation in truth, as my uncle's indisposition confined him constantly to his room, and rendered him incapable of any application to business. But, above all, the dignity of his character might have preserved him from the imputation of lending himself to counterfeit a part in such a piece of imposture.

In the meantime, Gregory Orloff, preparatory to the exaltation at which he aspired, was advanced to the dignity of a prince of the German empire; and whilst the grand chancellor was thus employed in unveiling the artifice of his abettors, others were not wanting to express their indignation at the insolence of his pretensions, and to seek the means of his

downfall. Of these was M. Hetroff, one of the most disinterested of the conspirators against Peter the Third, whose gentlemanlike manners and handsome person contributed not a little to inflame the jealousy which his disinterestedness had excited in the minds of the Orloffs. One of his cousins, M. Rgeffsky, who, from the share he had with both these parties in the revolution, was still in their confidence, and espoused the cause of either as best suited his own interest, treacherously betrayed to Alexis Orloff a design which Hetroff had formed, of preparing a strong remonstrance against Bestoucheff's petition, and of getting it signed by all those whose exertions had placed Catherine on the throne; and at the same time warned him of the vengeance denounced against the favourite on failure of their representations. Hetroff was in consequence arrested; and being interrogated by Alexis Orloff, who was said to have treated him with the utmost effrontery, and even violence, proudly declared he would be the first to plunge his sword into the heart of Gregory Orloff, though certain that his own death would be the consequence, rather than submit to the humiliation of acknowledging him for his sovereign, and of witnessing his country's disgrace, as the only result of their late patriotic exertions.

In a more public examination afterwards by M. Souvaroff, father to the famous marshal of that name, Hetroff being asked whether he had not communicated with me, and what was my opinion on the

subject which occasioned his arrest; "I took the liberty," was his answer, "of calling three times on Princess Daschkaw, with the intention of asking her advice, but the situation of her family was such as to prevent her seeing anybody. Had I been admitted, I should have fully disclosed my sentiments, and I am convinced I should in return have heard nothing from her lips but what was inspired by true patriotism and unfeigned magnanimity."

This handsome acknowledgment on the part of Hetroff was communicated confidentially to my husband by M. Souvaroff when he met him at the court next day, who, in consequence of some obligations to Prince Daschkaw's father, was happy, he said, to make known to him so agreeable a result of his official interrogatory.

To return to our domestic affairs. On the death of my sister-in-law, we persuaded old Princess Daschkaw to remove from the scene of so much suffering to the house of her brother, General Levontieff, whilst I continued in town an invalid, sinking under the effects of low spirits, and my late unavailing exertions.

In a few weeks afterwards, on the 12th of May, old style, my son was born; and on the day following my husband was taken ill with the quinsy, a complaint to which he was very subject. Things were in this state when, three days afterwards, a letter was brought from the empress to Prince Daschkaw, by Teploff, her secretary.

My uncles, the two Panins, were in the house when Teploff arrived, who either not choosing to meet them on this occasion, or having been instructed to acquit himself of his commission in private, requested to speak with Prince Daschkaw in the street, for reasons which he would there explain.

The prince, who kept his bed in the room next to mine, got up without making the least noise, and unknown to me, having wrapped himself in his great coat, went down stairs into the street, and received from the hands of M. Teploff a letter from the empress to the following effect :—

" It is my earnest desire not to be obliged to forget the services of Princess Daschkaw by her forgetfulness of what she owes herself; remind her of this, prince, as she gives herself, I understand, the indiscreet liberty of menacing me in her conversation."

I knew nothing of this affair until the evening, when I overheard the Panins in close conference in my husband's bedchamber, and observed an expression of affected composure on the countenance of the Princess Alexander, my sister-in-law, as she passed through my room into that of her brother. There was something of mystery in these circumstances which alarmed me to the greatest degree, fearful lest the prince's disorder might have taken some dangerous turn. I requested, therefore, to see my uncles, who came to my bedside, and in

order to calm my apprehensions, were compelled to acknowledge the real cause of their visit, and to repeat to me the substance of her majesty's letter.

I must confess I felt more vexation at Teploff for having called my husband from his bed, and exposed him to so much danger, than I did at the injustice of this extraordinary accusation. I desired, however, to see the letter. General Panin told me Prince Daschkaw had treated it as he himself would have done under the same circumstances, by tearing it in a hundred pieces, and replying to it with the utmost spirit.

I felt much more composed than might be expected on such an occasion, and was far from harbouring a feeling of resentment towards the empress; for with enemies such as I had about her person I had already made up my mind to sustain injuries like this. I calmly, therefore, requested Count Panin to ask her majesty when she would order the ceremony of my infant's baptism, as she had offered to be its godmother. I did this that I might know whether she would remember this promise in the midst of the false accusations which subjected me to her displeasure.

As soon as my uncles were gone, Prince Daschkaw came into the room; but in spite of the favourable reports I had heard, and his own cheerful attempts to dissipate my fears, I was so much shocked at his emaciated appearance that after he returned to his bed, (and I would not allow him to

remain with me long,) I could not close my eyes till long after the accustomed hour. At length I sank into a feverish repose, but from this I was quickly roused by the outcries and boisterous songs of a drunken group under my window, who had just burst into the street from the Orloffs' revellings, whose house, unfortunately for me, was in the immediate neighbourhood of ours. These bacchanals were a set of wretched weavers with whose drunken feats the Orloffs used to divert themselves. The horror with which I awoke so shook and disordered my whole frame that after being terrified almost out of my senses, I perceived my left hand and foot paralyzed. Apprehensive of immediate danger, I despatched my nurse for the surgeon of Prince Daschkaw's regiment, who was an inmate in the house, directing her to bring him without disturbing my husband. When he arrived, and found the alarming state I was in, he lost all courage in himself, and requested the assistance of a physician and the presence of Prince Daschkaw, neither of which, however, would I permit till about six in the morning, when, believing myself at the point of death, I called for the prince, and having consigned to him our children, I conjured him to make their education his first and greatest care; and then embracing him as I thought for the last time, I attempted to take leave of him for ever!

The look, the expression of countenance with which he received my faltering adieu, is still im-

printed on my heart, and this moment, though it appeared the last, was a moment almost of happiness; but it pleased God to preserve me from a fate which I contemplated with calm resignation, and to protract a life which, in the loss of this beloved husband, whom I had the misfortune to survive, was deprived of all its value.

The empress, according to her promise, and with her the Grand Duke Paul, stood sponsors to my infant, who received the name of the latter; but no inquiries were made, either before or after the ceremony, relative to my health.

Soon afterwards the court returned to Petersburg. My recovery was extremely slow, and I continued in Moscow, using the cold baths with very little benefit, until the month of July, when Prince Daschkaw being obliged to join his regiment at Petersburg and Dorpat, where it was stationed, I removed to our country house, seven versts from Moscow.

Mlle. Kamensky and her sisters shared my solitude till December, when finding my health in some degree re-established, I went, accompanied by the former young lady, to join the prince at Petersburg, who had hired a house to receive me.

CHAPTER IX.

Death of Augustus, King of Poland — Its political consequences—Opposite interests of the European powers—Intrigues—Prince Daschkaw appointed to head the army of Poland — Prince Wolchonsky — Illness of the princess — Retires to the country—Mirovitch—The princess wrongfully implicated in his projects against Catherine—Return of the empress from Riga — Suspicions of the empress — Explanations — Character of Mirovitch — Fate of the youthful Ivan — Trial and execution of Mirovitch — False charges against Catherine relative to Mirovitch—Count Rgefsky—Important services of Prince Daschkaw—News of his death in consequence of extreme exertions on a march—Effect of the news on the princess—Dangerous illness—Deranged state of the prince's affairs—Steps in consequence—The princess returns to Moscow.

As I am writing my own history, and not a history of the times, it would be superfluous to do more than merely glance at those public events which I may have occasion to notice.

About this period, the death of Augustus, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, opened a wide field for the contending intrigues of Europe. The house of Saxony still wished to preserve the crown of Poland in their own family. The King of

Prussia had a different interest to maintain. Some of the Polish nobles, gained over to Saxon views by bribes and promises, supported the pretensions of that house; whilst others, who were actuated by more patriotic motives, regarding with a jealous eye the dangerous policy which, in opposition to the principles of the constitution, had made the crown of Poland almost hereditary in the Saxon family, were strenuous advocates for a national election. The court of Vienna, extremely anxious to gain the confidence and friendship of the Empress of Russia, took her side of the question, and declared itself in favour of an election, perhaps with some secret view towards one of the Princes Czartorinsky, as Catherine had not yet avowed her wishes of bringing forward Poniatoffsky as a candidate for the vacant throne. As soon as this her intention was announced in council, Prince Orloff found reasons to oppose her choice, when Count Zachery Tchernicheff, the war minister, along with his brother, Count Ivan, who perceived the rising influence of Orloff, having ranged themselves, though without openly declaring it, on his side, employed every possible means short of manifest disobedience to control the movements of the troops, and thus to counteract the accomplishment of her majesty's wishes.

At length, when the appointed time of the diet approached, her majesty, judging it expedient to place a person at the head of her forces in Poland,

who would zealously prosecute her interests uninfluenced by the Orloff faction, made choice of Prince Daschkaw for this purpose. She accordingly gave him secret orders, and arranged matters so privately that he had quitted Petersburg before anybody knew of the mission on which he was sent.

The prince, exceedingly gratified by such a mark of confidence, set about the execution of his orders with the utmost zeal and activity, and, in fine, triumphed over every obstacle which was placed in his way. Prince Wolchonsky, who was commander-in-chief of the troops first sent into Poland to support the popular cause, had received orders to proceed no further than the town of Smolensky. Prince Daschkaw was ordered to advance to Warsaw, with a corps in sufficient force for all the purposes of his expedition; and the full powers he had received, being accountable to no one except to the empress and to her first minister, Count Panin, until he reached his place of destination, left no room for objections and difficulties on the part of his generals and brigadiers, some of whom were senior to himself.

The anxiety and agitation of mind which I experienced from the two-fold cause of my husband's absence, and the illness of my little Nastasia, brought on a relapse of my disorder, and change of air was prescribed; but as the letters I received every post from Prince Daschkaw were of the first importance

to my happiness, and on this account not choosing to remove far from the neighbourhood of Petersburg, I accepted the permission of my cousin, Prince Kourakin, to occupy one of his country seats, that same Gatchina now so beautiful and magnificent, which, after his death, was purchased by her majesty. It had not at that time its present line of approach, which has so considerably shortened its distance from Petersburg.

I remained here with my two children and Mademoiselle Kamensky in complete seclusion until the return of the empress from Riga, seldom, indeed, quitting the house except to take the air on horseback in its immediate environs; and that I might be at as little expense and see as few visitors as possible, during my husband's absence, I occupied only a wing of this spacious mansion, in which was a cold bath for my children. The greater part of it I offered to General Panin, who had lately been appointed senator and counsellor of state, and here for a short time he resided, till the departure of the empress for Riga, whither he accompanied her. During his residence with me he saw a crowd of people almost every morning on business connected with his office; but though we lived under the same roof, our establishments were distinct, and we had our separate doors of entrance at the two extremities of the building.

As his hours for business were before I awoke in the morning, I neither saw nor heard who the indi-

viduals were who called on him; and never were my dreams interrupted by an idea that Mirovitch was amongst the number, a person rendered so conspicuous afterwards by his senseless and criminal project of placing the young Ivan, who had been held captive from his infancy in the fortress of Slusselburgh, on the throne of Russia. The visits of this person to the house where I resided opened an abundant source of suspicion against me, and exposed my character and principles, either little known or wilfully misrepresented, to new injustice. I felt a good deal of chagrin in consequence, forgetting that I had indeed done too much for the empress, and too little for my own interest, not to render myself a distinguished mark for envy and calumny.

Soon after the return of the court from Riga I removed to Petersburg; and General Panin, as soon as he had established himself in his own house there, was joined by his very amiable wife, who had been previously residing at Moscow. In this respectable woman I had a sincere and highly valued friend, with whom I spent much of my time, as her husband, the general, was often necessarily absent, and occupied at court. With a singular sweetness of nature she possessed qualities which might have awakened the envy of her sex; but ill health, the consequence of a pulmonary complaint, which had alarmingly increased since we separated at Moscow, confined her within a very small circle of intimates,

of which, unhappily, she did not long live to continue, what she then was, the delight and admiration.

My uncle, General Panin, speaking to me one day on the subject of Mirovitch, to which I have just alluded, informed me that the catastrophe which decided the fate of the unhappy Ivan was announced to the empress whilst at Riga, in a letter from Alexis Orloff. She read it, he said, with great emotion, and having communicated its contents to her first secretary, Yellagin, she mentioned a postscript which it contained, stating that Mirovitch had been frequently observed to enter Princess Daschkaw's house at an early hour in the morning. Yellagin assured her majesty it must be a mistake; it was impossible, he said, that the Princess Daschkaw, who lived so much in retirement, could hold any conferences with a person like him, whom she must have looked upon as a madman if she had ever known him at all.

The just and honest impulse which actuated Yellagin in my defence did not allow him to stop here. He repaired immediately to the house of General Panin to relate the circumstance, and to learn what had given rise to Orloff's assertion. My uncle gave a full explanation of these mysterious visits, charging him to acquaint the empress that Mirovitch might have been often seen calling at my house, but that, having a cause depending in the senate, his business was with him; and that if her majesty

wished to know more respecting the character of this infatuated person, no one was better qualified to satisfy her curiosity than himself, as Mirovitch had formerly been a long time adjutant to his regiment. M. Yellagin having lost no time in making his report, the empress sent for my uncle, and if my total exculpation gave her pleasure, it might have been balanced by the portrait he sketched of the wretched Mirovitch ; for in representing a man without education, presumptuous through ignorance, and enterprising only from an incapacity to estimate consequences, it was impossible for her not to recognise the striking characteristics of Gregory Orloff.

I could not contemplate the undue influence, exercised over the mind of the empress, which led to the most unjust suspicions of her truest patriots and most faithful adherents, without sorrow, and even pity; and indeed, when Mirovitch was executed, so far from deploring his fate as an accomplice, I blessed my good fortune, in never having beheld a person whose image would certainly have haunted my imagination, as being the first criminal punished with death in Russia within my memory. His trial, which was conducted with the utmost publicity in full senate, before all the presidents and vice-presidents of the departments, and all the generals of divisions in Petersburg, left no doubt in Russia as to the real truth of the case, and the motives of his conduct. As the late revolution had been effected

with so much ease, the dethroning of a monarch seemed to the heated brain of Mirovitch a work of little difficulty; and having a mind to be the hero of his day, he sought to accomplish this object by the restoration of a prince so deplorably the victim of his madness and folly.

It has been said, and affected to be believed in several countries of Europe, that this whole affair was neither more nor less than a horrible intrigue on the part of the empress, who had gained over Mirovitch to act the part he did, and had afterwards sacrificed him. During my first travels, in 1770, I frequently introduced in conversation the subject of this conspiracy, in order to exculpate Catherine from the twofold wickedness of such a charge. I everywhere found, especially in France, that nations, viewing with a jealous eye the growing preponderance of Russia, made it a common interest to establish into truth, as a sort of political equipoise, every calumny against its active and enlightened sovereign. I remember, when speaking of this subject at Paris, expressing my astonishment, as I had before done, to M. and Madame Necker, at Spa, that a nation like the French, which had had a Cardinal Mazarin for its minister, should puzzle itself by accounting for such an action in such a manner, when their own annals must have so readily suggested the efficacious precedent of a well-mixed cup, for arranging these matters with greater secrecy and expedition.

Count Rgefsky, the Polish ambassador, was the

only stranger whom I admitted to my house, as through him I could frequently learn news of my husband. He told me how much Prince Daschkaw was contributing by his own activity to the accomplishment of the empress's schemes, and rendering the most important service to Poniatowsky, and that by his conduct and discipline he had engaged the affections and confidence of all his troops. This, he said, was well known to her majesty, who frequently spoke, and always with encomium, of her little field marshal, as she used to call him. But Heaven, alas! did not permit that he should live to enjoy the credit of his services, and the reward of that noble disinterestedness which on this, as on all occasions, distinguished him.

In the month of September, a few days after the receipt of the despatches which announced the elevation of Poniatowsky to the throne of Poland, a courier arrived from our ambassador at Warsaw, Count Keyserling, with an account that Prince Daschkaw, whilst pursuing his forced marches, unwilling to allow himself repose, although attacked by a violent fever, had sunk under its effects, and thus sacrificed his life to his zeal and ardour in the discharge of his duty. This event, the dreadful crisis of my destiny, was known and deplored by the whole city before it was disclosed to me.

One morning, my aunt, the wife of General Panin, came to call on me, and proposed a drive in her

carriage. She was more than usually pale, and her countenance betrayed every mark of dejection. I was apprehensive that her illness had rapidly increased, and therefore hastened to accompany her wherever she proposed, little conscious that I myself was the wretched object of her commiseration. On arriving at her house, my two uncles received us with expressions of countenance which ill disguised their embarrassment and distress. The fatal secret was on their lips, but dinner passed before any one had courage to reveal it to me. At length, with all the tenderness of friendship, it was gradually unfolded; I heard it, and became insensible to everything.

In this comparatively happy state I continued several hours. My recollection at length returned, and with it a full sense of my misfortune. I embraced my children, who had been sent for, with the bitterest anguish, and again sank into a sort of torpor, in which I remained between life and death for several days. My aunt, that best of women, in the first moments of my affliction, had not only sent for my children and their attendants as well as mine, but had established me in her own apartments, and, without a consideration for her own declining health, attended me day and night with the most tender assiduity, until all danger was at an end.

Mlle. Kamensky was no less kind and assiduous, and through their care, with that of my skilful and worthy physician, M. Krouse, my life was saved—

but, alas! for what? I revived only to reflect on what I had lost, and to contemplate the dreary blank in my future existence!

From this state of mind I was roused to sympathy and exertion by a fresh source of sorrow. The attentions which had been lavished on me were now demanded in return, by the increased illness of my aunt. She was soon confined to her bed, which she never afterwards quitted. Every day I had myself conveyed into her apartment, till I had the misfortune of losing this tender and inestimable friend.

It was not until some time after I was re-established in my own house, to which I was conveyed immediately after my aunt's death, that I was made acquainted with the deranged state of Prince Daschkaw's affairs. His own natural generosity, and perhaps some ideas of expediency in regard to the service on which he had been sent, had involved him in great expenses and debt, by lending money and giving engagements for the inferior officers, to prevent as much as possible those vexatious oppressions on the march to which the people whom he wished to conciliate were necessarily exposed.

In the absence of my brother Alexander, who was minister plenipotentiary in Holland, I had to regret the only one of my family in whose cordial and unvarying affection I could look, at a moment like the present, for comfort and support. I found myself alone at the age of twenty, inconsolable for my

loss, and, whilst a mark to all the calumnies which beset the highest ranks of life, condemned to struggle against the difficulties and privations belonging to the lowest.

My only resource for advice or assistance of any kind was in the friendship of my two uncles, the Counts Panin, to the elder of whom my husband had written his dying request, that he would take upon himself the guardianship of our children and the arrangement of his disordered affairs, imploring him not to lose sight of the comfort and independence of his family amidst the justice due to his numerous creditors. This appeal to the affection of the uncle was not made in vain.

Both brothers engaged to execute the duty thus imposed on one, to the best of their power, and insisted on the advantage of my being a guardian of my children and their property conjointly with themselves; as by living on the estate at Moscow I should be better able to learn and advance its interests than they, with every good intention possible, whose public appointments required their residence at Petersburg.

The elder Count Panin, conceiving that the empress wanted but the opportunity of rendering me a service, informed her of the state of my finances, and applied for an ukase, empowering us, as trustees, to sell some of the estates, in order to pay my husband's debts. I was exceedingly shocked on hearing of this application, and when the request was

granted, instead of making use of this imperial favour, I solemnly resolved rather to live on bread and water all my life than sell one inch of the patrimonial territory of my children.

The first winter of my widowhood was passed at Petersburg, in sickness as well as affliction. I was nevertheless much occupied with my new duties. I made an exact estimate of all Prince Daschkaw's debts; and to three of the principal creditors I gave up, in part of payment, the few jewels I had, and all our plate, with the exception of just as many spoons and forks as were indispensably necessary for four persons,—being determined to persevere in such a system of economy and self-privation as would enable me to satisfy every claim without detriment to my children, and without application for any relief from the crown.

My journey to Moscow, which I was anxious to accomplish this winter, before the melting of the ice, was retarded by my own ill health, and as I began to recover, by the illness of my child, until the beginning of March. Immediately on my arrival there I wished to proceed to, and establish myself on, our estate in the neighbourhood; but the house, I understood, was literally a ruin. As much of the timber, however, was still serviceable, I had a small wooden cottage built with it, which was constructed with so much despatch as to be ready for our reception by the beginning of summer.

I had, as I already observed, disposed of all my

plate and trinkets at Petersburg; I now contracted my annual expenditure to five hundred rubles, and to this change of circumstances my establishment, dress, and plan of living, were strictly conformable. I became my own steward, my children's nurse and governess, as well as guardian; and thus, through perseverance in my system of economy, and an active superintendence of the concerns of my children's estate, at the end of five years from Prince Daschkaw's death, there was no longer a debt remaining.

Whilst recurring for a moment to this period of my life, I cannot but reflect with surprise and satisfaction that, young as I was, a widow at twenty, accustomed from my earliest youth to luxury and expense, I could devote myself with such steadiness of principle to the watchful cares of a mother, and to all the duties of adversity. But so it was; and well was every sacrifice compensated by the honest testimony of my conscience, a source whence I drew, and have continued to draw, the only unalloyed pleasure.

I experienced some mortification and embarrassment the second year of my retirement, in finding that the house in which we formerly lived at Moscow,—belonging, as I imagined, to my children, in common with the rest of their father's property, but which, in consequence of some error or omission in the conveyance when purchased by Prince Daschkaw's father, being left at the disposal of his mother,

—was now given by her, on retiring into a convent for life, to her grandaughter, Mlle. Gleboff. This was, in many respects, to me no great personal loss; yet, as some place of abode in Moscow was absolutely necessary during the winter, it reduced me to the alternative of purchasing a small plot of ground which I made choice of in the same street, being the site of a ruined mansion, part of which remained, and of erecting another wooden building on a scale more suitable to my circumstances, when finished, than the one of which I was deprived. I felt, however, no ill will to my mother-in-law, although in this instance I had some reason to complain of injustice; and the better to guard against any discussion of a subject which might lead to an avowal of my sentiments, I resolved within myself never to pronounce the word *house* in her presence as long as I lived. This resolution I believe I only once broke, and that was two or three years afterwards; for at a time when her apartments in the convent were undergoing some repair, and her son-in-law, Gleboff, had no accommodation to give, I had much pleasure in offering her the use of a house adjoining mine, which I had just before purchased very advantageously.

CHAPTER X.

Excursion of the princess to Kiow, in 1768—The governor, General Voyekoff—The convent of Petchersky—Singular custom—The university of Kiow—Its early history—Return of the princess to Petersburg, in 1769—Anniversary of the revolution—Interview with the empress—Return to Moscow—Preparations for a journey through Europe—An imperial gift, and its reception—Travelling party—The princess visits Riga and Dantzic—Singular anecdote at the latter place—How to regain a lost battle—Berlin—Prince Dolgorouky — Presentation of the princess and her party at court—Extraordinary favour shewn to the princess—The queen and her sister—The princess visits Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa — She becomes acquainted with M. Necker and Lord and Lady Sussex—She learns English—Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Morgan—The princess visits England—Her arrival in London—Visits Oxford, Bath, Bristol, &c.—Returns to London—Her acquaintance with the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland.

In the year 1768, I solicited permission to go abroad, in hopes that change of air and of scene might benefit my children's health, which was very delicate; but I applied in vain, for my letters were never answered. I made, however, an excursion this summer to Kiow, not confining myself to the

direct route, but frequently leaving it to visit places and objects of curiosity in the surrounding country, the most interesting of which were the German colonies planted by her majesty. My stay at Kiow was rendered very agreeable by the attentions of the governor, General Voyekoff, a relation of my husband, a singularly well-informed man, who, having been employed by far the greater part of his life in affairs of diplomacy at different courts, had travelled much, and had learned to contemplate men and things in their true light. His powers of conversation, embellished by great gaiety of manners, which he had preserved to an advanced age, rendered his society extremely entertaining and instructive. I was every day at his house; and he was my conductor and cicerone on a visit to the catacombs, those numerous excavations in the centre of a mountain on which part of the town is built. In these caves are seen the bodies of saints who lived and died there many ages ago, still remaining in almost miraculous preservation.

He took me also to the cathedral within the precincts of the convent of Petchersky, remarkable for the ancient mosaic which ornaments it walls. In one of the fine churches with which this city abounds, there are a number of paintings in fresco, representing several councils held at Kiow previous to the division which took place in the Russian church. This town has long possessed academies and an university, where several hundred scholars

are educated at the public expense. In aid of this establishment a custom I found still prevailed for the scholars to sing psalms and hymns every evening, in groups under the windows of the inhabitants, who threw out money, of which a strict account was always rendered by the boys to their masters.

The sciences were brought from Greece to Kiow long before they were known amongst many of those European nations who now bestow so liberally on our countrymen the title of barbarians. Even the philosophy of Newton was taught in those schools when Roman-catholic priestcraft would not suffer it to enter France.

During this little tour, which occupied nearly three months, I travelled about three thousand versts, and was delighted to find it fully answering the object I had in view, without any inconvenient expense.

The following year, 1769, I went to Petersburg, determined so to take my measures at court as to obtain permission to travel abroad. As a Russian noble, I had full liberty to go where I pleased; but as Lady of the Portrait to her majesty, this permission was necessary. I delayed, however, making any further request to the empress until I could do it in person, and this I resolved to do on the day of the anniversary of the revolution, which was to be celebrated at the palace of Peterhoff.

On the day of this fête I went to court, and during the ball, in order that I might not be overlooked,

and so lose the opportunity I sought, I contrived to place myself, as if inadvertently, amongst a group of foreign ministers, with some of whom I had entered into conversation as the empress approached. After saying a few words to them, her majesty addressed herself also to me. The instant I had made my reply, and before she had time to turn away, I made known the object of my attendance in asking her permission to go abroad for two years, on account of the ill health of my children. "I am extremely sorry, Madam," was her answer, "at the cause of your wishing to travel, but certainly you are your own mistress, to dispose of yourself as you please."

As the empress moved away, I begged the chamberlain, Talitzen, to acquaint the minister, Count Panin, that he had now only to prepare my passport, as the empress's consent to my departure was no longer wanting. This point being accomplished, I quitted Petersburg, and hastened back to Moscow, in order to settle my affairs, and to make arrangements for the journey.

On matters relative to expense, to which the attention of my two uncles and other intimate friends had been directed, my resolutions were already taken. My intention was, to assume on my travels the name of Madame Michalkoff, a name I made choice of from a little estate belonging to my children, near Moscow; and to regulate all my expenses accordingly. To travel in a very private manner

was certainly the one best suited to my finances, and no less so, as I thought, to the main purpose of my journey. I wished to see things with my own eyes, in order that I might fix on that place for the education of my children which offered the most advantages, wherever it might be; well convinced that if I remained at home, the indulgence of relations and the flattery of dependents, not to mention the want of good instructors in my own country, would counteract all my plans and wishes on an object the only one in life which I now had at heart.

On my return to Petersburg, in December, I used such expedition in preparing for my journey that I was ready to take my departure in the same month. Just before leaving Petersburg, I received a visit one morning from an under-secretary of state, who came from her majesty to make me an offer of four thousand roubles, for which sum he had brought an order. Although I was surprised, and could not help feeling great indignation at a present so contemptible, I did not think proper to irritate the empress by an absolute refusal. I therefore requested the secretary to wait a moment, and having shewn him a couple of small bills of some necessary articles for my journey, I begged he would leave the amount of them on my table, and put the remainder of the money into his pocket.

I was ready, as I observed, to commence my travels in December, and I lost no time in setting

out. Our party consisted of Mademoiselle Kamensky, my two children, and M. Worontzow, a near relation of mine, who belonged to the Russian embassy at the Hague.

We stopped a few days at Riga, where we engaged one of our country vehicles to carry us as far as Berlin; but before we left Koenisburgh, where we had spent a week with Countess Kirsirling, we were obliged to abandon our sledges and have recourse to wheels, although with these we had much difficulty in ploughing through the sandy roads of Prussia.

At Dantzig, where we were to remain a couple of nights, we lodged at the Russian hotel, the most considerable in the place. On being shewn into the large eating-room I was struck with two pictures, the subjects of which were battles lost by the Russian troops, who were represented in groups of dead and dying, or on their knees supplicating mercy of the victorious Prussians. I was so scandalized at the figure my countrymen here made, in the sight of travellers of all nations who frequented this hotel, that I seriously set about upbraiding M. Rebender, our chargé d'affaires, for allowing such an abominable monument of our disgrace to exist. He gravely replied that it was quite out of his province to redress grievances of such a nature; "But, Madam," said he, "you are not the only one whom these battles have offended: Alexis Orloff, when he passed through Dantzig some time ago, was at this

same hotel, and was no less indignant at the pictures than yourself." "Why did he not, then, buy them," said I, "at any price, and throw them into the fire?—Were I a twentieth part as rich, I would do so in a moment; but, as that is not the case, I must have recourse to a plan which will, perhaps, answer as well."

As soon as our resident left us, I commissioned two gentlemen, MM. Woltchkoff and Schtellin,—both belonging to our embassy at Berlin, whither they afterwards accompanied us,—to buy me some oil colours, blue, green, red, and white; and as soon as supper was over, and we had well barricaded the doors, these gentlemen, who knew how to handle a pencil, assisted me in regaining these lost battles, by changing the blue and white of the conquering Prussians into the green and red uniforms of our Russian heroes. It cost us the whole night to achieve this twofold victory; and it must have occasioned no little surprise and curiosity among the good people of the house, to find that three of our party were thus locked up together, and their dull room, hitherto the refuge of the yawning traveller, lighted up all night, and suddenly become the theatre of some mysterious mirth. For my part, the idea so enchanted me that I was like a truant child, both fearful and triumphant at the frolic. The next day I had my trunks unpacked in this same field of battle, as the only excuse I could offer for keeping every one out of it

but those of our party and the two companions of my prowess.

The day following we proceeded on our journey, but not before I had exhibited to M. Rebender this painted redemption of our imperial honour; and we had much amusement, as we drove along, in speculating on the surprise of our stupid host at the unaccountable turn in the fate of his battles.

I spent two months at Berlin in the most agreeable manner possible. Prince Dolgorouky was our minister at that court, a man universally beloved and esteemed, and no man was ever more worthy of being so. We received from him every polite attention which his frank and friendly nature could suggest, bestowed at all times without the least affectation or parade.

What I could offer to excite the curiosity of the queen and princesses I know not; but they, it seemed, as well as Prince Henry and his amiable wife, often urged our ambassador to have me presented at court. I always excused myself on the plea of the Prussian etiquette, which did not admit of any one being received under a feigned name; and as I had assumed mine from a motive of economy, which was to operate throughout my travels, it would give me too much the air of an adventurer were I to change my plans on this subject as circumstances of temptation offered. My excuse, when reported to the king at Sans Souci by Count Finkerstein, minister of foreign affairs, pro-

duced the following answer:—"Tell her," said his majesty, "that etiquette is a foolish thing, and that Princess Daschkaw must be received at the Prussian court by whatever name, and in whatever manner, she thinks proper."

I dined the next day at Mr. Mitchel's, the British envoy, where I met Count Finkerstein, and was made acquainted with this flattering message from the great Frederick. As there were now no means of escape, I put myself to the expense of a new black gown, and went to court. I was received in the most distinguished manner by her majesty, who engaged me to stay supper. The prince and princesses were no less marked in their attentions, and from that time, during my stay at Berlin, such was their continued kindness, and so repeated were the invitations I received, from one court or the other, that I had seldom the opportunity left of appearing at any other entertainment.

If the origin of the partiality shewn me by the queen and her sister were to be traced, I believe the greatest merit I possessed in their consideration arose from the following circumstance. They both had such an unfortunate hesitation in their speech, that it was necessary for a chamberlain to be placed as a sort of interpreter between them and every stranger who was presented to them. Luckily, I caught their meaning so quickly, and answered so immediately to what they said, that it gave me the appearance of being almost insensible to this imperfection, which put them

thoroughly at their ease; a happiness they very seldom experienced.

This sister of the queen was widow to the prince royal, and mother to the Princess of Orange, and also to the prince who succeeded the great Frederick; for *great* I may indeed call him, if a commanding genius, and a constant solicitude for the welfare of his people, to which even his passions were subservient, can entitle him to such a distinction.

As the season approached for drinking the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa, I quitted Berlin with much regret, a place I shall always think of with sentiments of pleasure and gratitude. We hurried through Westphalia, which appeared to me less dirty than is represented in the very entertaining letters of Baron de Bar.

We remained at Hanover only just long enough to have our carriages put in order. Finding that there was an opera on the evening of our arrival, I went to it, in company with Mlle. Kamensky, leaving M. Worontzow, who was not well, at home. Our only attendant was a Russ servant, who knew no other language than his own, and consequently could not betray who we were. I took this precaution, because I had heard from Prince Earnest of Mecklenburgh, that his elder brother, who was governor of the city, wished to be informed when I arrived at Hanover, but which I had not the least desire he should be made acquainted with, as it was my intention to remain there unknown. In the box

to which we were conducted two ladies had already taken their seats, who, with much civility, though there was plenty of room, made way for us, that we might be placed as conveniently as possible. At the end of the first act, I observed a young officer leave the box of the prince, and presently enter the one in which we were seated. After a few words addressed to us, and not to the ladies our neighbours, "Mesdames," said the young gentleman, with some flippancy of tone and manner, "appear to be strangers." "Yes, Sir." "His highness wishes to know whom I have the honour of speaking to." "That, Sir," I replied, "can be but of very little importance either to yourself or to his highness; and, since we are females, we may claim for once, I trust, the privilege of holding our tongues, and therefore of declining to answer your question." He appeared a little disconcerted, and took his departure. The two ladies eyed us with great surprise. My reprimand, I own, had been a little severe; but I cannot repress the natural antipathy I feel to the effrontery of a coxcomb. Towards the conclusion of the piece, I begged Mlle. Kamensky not to contradict what I was going to say, when, turning to the Hanoverian ladies, I begged them to understand, that though I had refused to answer a rather impertinent inquiry from the aid-de-camp of the prince, yet, as they had treated us with so much politeness, I would not conceal from them that I was by profession a singer at the theatre, and my

companion a dancer, and that we were come in search of an advantageous engagement. Mlle. Kamensky opened her large eyes with astonishment, and the ladies, who had before been so civil, changed their tone, and made a movement, as much as the box permitted, to turn their backs upon us.

Our stay at Hanover being so momentary, I have nothing to say of this electorate, further than that it appears to have a noble breed of horses, even those of the peasants, and that the country is well cultivated.

At Aix-la-Chapelle I took a house opposite to the public rooms and baths. The most agreeable circumstance connected with this place is an acquaintance I made with two very accomplished Irishmen, Mr. Collins and Colonel Nugent, both retired officers who had formerly served in Holland. These gentlemen (the latter of whom was brother to the minister of that name from the court of Vienna to Berlin) were daily of our society, of which their vivacity and politeness rendered them both the spirit and ornament.

From Aix I proceeded to Spa, a place of most delightful recollections; for here it was that I formed an intimacy with Mrs. Hamilton, daughter of Mr. Ryder, Archbishop of Tuam, and Mrs. Morgan, daughter of Mr. Tisdale, solicitor-general in Ireland. This intimacy soon grew into a friendship which has stood the test of time and absence, and all human casualties, for five and thirty years,

and still exhibits to all who know us the reality of this rare and invaluable blessing.

I also became acquainted with Monsieur and Madame Necker. But the people with whom I lived in the greatest intimacy were almost exclusively English, amongst whom were Lord and Lady Sussex. I took great pains to acquire the English language, of which I was not altogether ignorant before; so, with the aid of French and German, and the lessons of my two excellent friends, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Morgan, who came every morning to read with me some English book, and to correct my pronunciation, I soon made very considerable proficiency.

As the family of Tisdale were to return home this autumn, I determined on paying a visit to England in their company, though it were but for a few weeks, having engaged to pass the ensuing winter with Mrs. Hamilton, at Aix, in Provence, whither she proposed attending her invalid father. I accordingly accompanied my friends to Calais, and thence we passed over in the same packet to Dover. It was the first time I had been at sea, and never was there a greater sufferer from sea-sickness, in spite of all the care and attention of my amiable friend Mrs. Morgan.

On our arrival in London, I found a house ready for our reception, which had been engaged by the Russian minister, Count Pouschkin, in the neighbourhood of his own; and I had the good fortune

also to meet with a very kind welcome from Madame Pouschkin, the first wife to the above, a most pleasing woman, who seemed to possess every quality requisite in a valuable friend, and such I had the happiness to find her.

I remained in London enjoying the society of my friend, Mrs. Morgan, and Countess Pouschkin, until the former returned with her father to Dublin. I then left my children under the care of Mme. Pouschkin, who was, in every respect, most worthy of such a trust, and set out on an excursion to visit Bath, Bristol, and Oxford.

During this short absence from my children, which lasted but thirteen days, and was the first time I had been separated from my son, every post brought me letters from him, describing, in his childish manner, the horse-races and shows to which Countess Pouschkin had taken him, and a visit which he paid with this kind, good-natured friend to the Duchess of Queensbury,—in a way really wonderful for a little fellow only seven years of age.

After my return to London, I remained there but ten days, and these I wholly devoted to seeing everything in this interesting capital which could gratify the curiosity of a stranger. I did not go to Court, and I made very few acquaintance; amongst the few were the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland.

CHAPTER XI.

The princess returns to France—Paris—Diderot—Madame Necker and Madame Geoffrin—Discussion between the princess and Diderot on the slavery of the Russian peasants—Anecdote of Diderot—M. de la Rhulliere—His pamphlet on the Russian revolution—Singular anecdote of Diderot—Visit to Versailles—The royal family—The Duc de Choiseul—His enmity to Catherine the Second—His civility to the princess.

UNFORTUNATELY for so bad a sailor as myself, our passage back to Calais was extremely boisterous. The wind would have served very well for taking us to the Indies; but was, for our passage, so adverse and so violent that we were obliged to be shut up six-and-twenty hours in the cabin.

As the waves dashed against the window, threatening to overwhelm us all, my children, being excessively frightened, cried bitterly. I therefore summoned resolution enough to make them feel, on an occasion like the present, the advantages of courage over cowardice, by drawing their attention to the conduct of the sailors, who, instead of being alarmed at dangers, were using every effort to

overcome them; and then, after adding a word or two on the duty of submission to the Divine will under every circumstance, I peremptorily ordered silence. I was soon more literally obeyed than I expected, for in spite of the roaring of the storm, I had the happiness of seeing them both sink into a profound sleep, while I inwardly trembled at our danger.

At length we reached Calais in perfect safety, and having parted with my companion and cousin, M. Worontzow, who went on direct to Aix, in Provence, we took the route to Brussels, at which place we stayed only a few days, and thence proceeded, without any interruption, on our way to Paris.

During my stay at Paris, which did not exceed three weeks, I lived in great privacy, and wholly intent on visiting the churches, convents, statues, pictures, and all the monuments of art which it presented. I declined making acquaintance with any one, except with the celebrated Diderot. Whenever I went to the theatres, as to see without being seen was my object, I never went otherwise than dressed in an old rusty black gown and close cap, and took my station amongst the people in the pit.

One evening, almost the last before I left Paris, Diderot was sitting with me tête-à-tête, when a servant announced Madame Necker and Madame

Geoffrin. Diderot instantly, with his usual vivacity of manner, without giving me a moment's time to speak, ordered that they should be denied.

"But," said I, "I knew Madame Necker at Spa, and the other lady, being in habits of corresponding with the Empress of Russia, I should be very glad to make her acquaintance."

"Have you not assured me," said he, "that you have only two or three days longer to remain at Paris? consequently, she could only see you two or three times at most, and your character would never be comprehended. No, I cannot endure that any of my idols should be blasphemed. Were you to remain a couple of months here, believe me, I should be the very first to make you acquainted with Madame Geoffrin, for she is an excellent woman; but being one of our Parisian trumpets, I absolutely will not consent to her sounding forth your character before she sufficiently knows it."

Entering into his whim, I desired the servant to say I was unwell. This, however, did not suffice, for the next morning I received a very complimentary note from Madame Necker, expressive of her friend's great anxiety to see me, and to make the acquaintance of one of whom she had formed the highest ideas. To this I replied, that the desire I had of preserving their favourable opinion must be to me, on the present occasion, the very motive for declining the pleasure they proposed, as the

situation in which I was would only risk a forfeiture of their flattering partiality.

This circumstance obliged me to keep my room that day, and I sent my carriage for Diderot. I usually called myself at his door, after my morning drives, which lasted from eight until three in the afternoon, and took him home with me to dinner, and very often kept him in conversation until long after midnight.

On one occasion, I remember, when we were speaking of what he called the slavery of our Russian peasants, "You will allow," said I, "that since I have not the soul of a slave, neither have I that of a tyrant; on this plea, therefore, I possess some little title to your confidence. On the subject of liberty, as applied to our peasants, I once thought with you; and, in consequence, I sought to diffuse happiness amongst my own people, proportioned to my power, by rendering them more free. But experience soon taught me that the only effect it produced was, throwing them on the mercy of the crown, or rather, on that of every petty clerk who chose to exercise, under the mask of office, either the abuse of pillage or malversation. The riches and happiness of our peasants are the sole causes of our own prosperity, and the augmentation of our revenues; and as this is an established axiom, one must be mad indeed," said I, "to act in such a manner as to impoverish the source of our own especial

interest. The nobles are the intermediate power between the crown and the slave; and it therefore becomes our advantage to defend the latter against the rapacity of governors of provinces and overseers."

"But, princess," he replied, "you cannot help granting that liberty would tend to augment their knowledge, and that from this source abundance of riches would naturally flow."

"If the sovereign," said I, "in breaking some links of the chain which binds the peasantry to the nobles, were likewise to snap some of those which render the nobles subservient to their despotic will, I would joyfully sign a contract such as this with my blood. But in the present instance you must pardon me for saying that you appear to have confounded the effect with the cause; for it is knowledge which produces liberty, and not liberty knowledge; the former, unaccompanied by the latter, never yet failed to produce anarchy and confusion. When the lower classes of my countrymen are enlightened, they will then deserve their freedom, because they will understand how to enjoy it without using it to the detriment of their fellow-citizens, and the consequent destruction of that subordination so indispensable to every civilized community."

"You argue perfectly well, charming princess," said he; "but nevertheless, I am not yet convinced."

"There exist," said I, "in our fundamental laws

sure antidotes against the tyranny of the nobles, although Peter the First annulled several, and even a principal one, by which the peasants had a power of exposing their grievances against their masters. However, in the present reign, a governor of a province, after an appeal to the marshal and deputies of the nobles belonging to his government, may punish an act of tyranny on the part of a noble against his peasants, by dispossessing the offender of the exercise of power, and transferring his lands and peasants into the guardianship of another, appointed by the nobles themselves. On this subject," said I, "I cannot explain myself as I should wish, though it is one which has occupied my frequent meditations, and at these moments I have presented to my imagination a man born blind, reposing on a rock in the midst of the most frightful precipices; his natural defect only renders him ignorant of the dangers of his situation, without depriving him of those powers which secure his only sense of happiness; he is therefore gay, he eats, drinks, sleeps, hearkens to the warbling of the birds, and sings responsive to the cheerfulness of his own innocent and contented mind. Suddenly an oculist appears, who, without reflecting on the impossibility of extricating him from his position, removes the film, and restores him to sight. What, then, is the consequence? A flood of light opens to his understanding only to convince him of his unhappiness;

he no longer sings, or sleeps, or eats, but is absorbed in the contemplation of the precipices and engulfing waves which surround him, and from whence it is impossible to escape. A little time brings on listlessness, and at the next glance I contemplate him, in the flower of his age, fallen a victim to despair!"

Diderot sprung from his chair, as if by a mechanical movement, so unexpectedly was he struck with this little sketch of my feelings. He walked in rapid strides across the room; then suddenly stopping short, and spitting on the floor in a passion, without giving himself time to draw his breath—"What a woman you are!" said he; "you have in a moment overset all the ideas I have been cherishing these twenty years!" This circumstance is truly characteristic of a being whom I admired even in these hurricanes of his enthusiastic nature.

The sincerity and truth of his character, the brilliancy of his genius, together with the interest and esteem which he uniformly manifested for me on all occasions, attached me to him as long as he lived, and makes his memory very dear to me even at the present moment. The world has not sufficiently known this extraordinary man. Virtue and simplicity reigned in every action; and to be accessory to the good of his fellow-creatures was his ruling passion and pursuit. If too much vivacity sometimes led him into error, he was still sincere,

for he was ever his own greatest dupe; but it remains not for me to attempt an eulogium worthy of his many excellences, which others, better qualified, have not neglected to pronounce.

One evening, when Diderot was sitting with me, M. de la Rhulliere was announced. He had been attached to the mission of Baron Breteuil, at Petersburg, where I had often seen him at my own house, as well as at Mlle. Kamensky's.

Hearing his name, I was in the act of desiring him to be shewn up stairs, when Diderot, seizing my hand, said, with the utmost earnestness, "One moment only, princess; let me ask you, when your travels are finished, whether you have any idea of returning to Russia?"

"What a question!" said I. "Have I any right to expatriate my children?"

"Well, then," said he, "desire that La Rhulliere may not be admitted, and I will satisfy you with my reasons afterwards."

There was something so earnest and sincere, which both his countenance and manner expressed, that I implicitly obeyed him, and without the least reluctance refused the visit of a very agreeable acquaintance, from the perfect confidence I had in the goodness of his yet unknown reasons.

"You are not aware," continued he, "that this man has written a memoir of the Russian revolution."

"No," said I; "but if he has, you have furnished me with an additional motive for wishing to see him."

"I can tell you, then," said he, "all that is to be known by reading its contents. You would have found yourself adorned with all the talents of our sex, added to the charms and virtues of your own. The empress, however, is treated in a very different manner, as well as the King of Poland, with whom her affair when grand duchess is fully exposed; and in consequence, her majesty, through the means of Betskoy and your chargé d'affaires, Prince Galitzin, set on foot a negotiation to buy up the work, which was so awkwardly conducted that three copies were taken and deposited by La Rhulliere, one in the cabinet of foreign affairs, a second in the hands of Madame de Grammont, and a third with the Archbishop of Paris. After this failure, I was honoured by a commission from her majesty to make some terms with La Rhulliere himself; but all I could obtain from him was a promise not to publish it, either during his lifetime or that of the empress. You perceive, therefore, that in receiving the visit of La Rhulliere you would have given a sanction to his book, which is a source of infinite uneasiness to her majesty, and which, having been read at Madame Geoffrin's, whose house assembles all persons of any note here, and all strangers of distinction, is thus made known enough already, notwithstanding this good lady's friendship for

Poniatowsky, whom, whilst at Paris, she loaded with the most extravagant professions of kindness, and whom she afterwards, in all her letters, addressed as her very dear son."

"But how can one reconcile this to one's self?" replied I.

"Oh! as for that," said he, "we give ourselves very little trouble in France; we think and act without any reference to consistency, and neither sixty nor eighty years of experience ever make the slightest difference in the heedlessness of our unreflecting natures."

De la Rhulliere called twice afterwards at my door, but was not admitted. I was sensibly touched at this proof of Diderot's friendship, the good effect of which I experienced on my return to Petersburg fifteen months afterwards, when I learned from a person very much in Count Theodore Orloff's confidence, to whom some years before I had the good fortune of rendering a service, that Diderot, soon after my departure from Paris, had written to the empress, and, after speaking in the warmest terms of my sincere attachment to her, he declared that since I had absolutely refused to see La Rhulliere, the authenticity of his book had been more called in question than by anything which ten Voltaires, or fifty wretched Diderots, could ever have said or written. He had not even hinted to me his intention of writing this circumstance to the em-

press, which his foresight alone had occasioned, and his friendship had thus rendered meritorious, as my own action; a delicacy of conduct which, as long as I live, I shall never cease to reflect on with admiration and gratitude.

Before I quitted Paris I was very desirous of seeing Versailles, and I wished to go there without any one knowing of my intention. This fancy I was determined to indulge, in spite of the arguments of Monsieur Hotinsky, our chargé d'affaires, who had conjured up a thousand difficulties in the shape of the French police; for not a stranger, he assured me, however inconsiderable, could stir in Paris whose movements were not watched.

I made him promise, however, that his horses should be in waiting for me out of the town; and, after giving my French laquais de place commissions enough to employ him for some hours, I took with me a Russian servant, who spoke no other language than his own, and getting into my carriage with my two children, and an old Russian major, who was at Paris for his health, I ordered the coachman to drive out of town that I might breathe the fresh air a little, and having directed him to the place where M. Hotinsky was in waiting with his horses, they were immediately added to my own, and we drove on. M. Hotinsky accompanied us as far as the gate leading to the gardens of Versailles, where we alighted, and walked till dinner time.

It was one of those days when the king and royal family dined in public. We mingled in the crowd, which was certainly anything but the beau monde, and entered along with it into a very dirty, waste, tattered room, where presently afterwards Louis the Fifteenth, the dauphin and dauphiness, and the two other daughters, Mesdames Adelaide and Victoire, appeared, and taking their seats at table, eat their dinners most heartily.

Every remark I made to my companions was commented on by some of the worthy ladies in the crowd about us; as, for instance, observing that Madame Adelaide drank her soup out of a mug, I was assailed by two or three voices at once, with, "Pray, madam, do not the king and princesses in your country do the same?"

"There are neither king nor princesses in my country," answered I.

"Then madam must be a Dutch lady," returned one of them.

"Perhaps so," said I, moving away, to escape more minute inquiries.

When the royal repast was at an end, we hurried into our carriage, and arrived at Paris without any one knowing that we had for a moment left it, very much amused at the notion of having eluded the boasted vigilance of the French police.

The Duke de Choiseul, who was then minister of state, would scarcely give credit to this story when

he heard it. He was well known to all Russians for his peculiar enmity towards the empress and her government; and though he made me several flourishes of civility through our chargé d'affaires, inviting me to partake of a brilliant entertainment at his house, to be given expressly on my account, I could make no better return than the offer of my thanks and excuses, coupled with an assurance that Madame Michalkoff was not insensible to the attentions of such distinguished personages as his excellency, although her time on the present occasion, being devoted exclusively to other objects, would not admit of her receiving or attending their fêtes.

CHAPTER XII.

The princess quits Paris for Aix-la-Chapelle—Meets her English friends, Lady Ryder, Lady Oxford, and Lady Carlisle—Excursions to Montpelier and Hières—Correspondence with Diderot—Leaves Aix for Switzerland—Lyons—Marriage festivities—The Princess of Piedmont—Mrs. Hamilton and Lady Ryder—Public curiosity—Theatre at Lyons—An awkward situation—French politeness—Switzerland—Visit to Voltaire — Madame Denis—Tête-à-tête with Voltaire—M. Hubert—Anecdotes of him and Voltaire—The canine sculptor—Departure from Switzerland—Travelling anecdotes—Carlsruhe—Invitation from the Margravine of Baden—Visit to the palace—Dusselldorf—Frankfort—Old acquaintance.

After remaining something less than three weeks at Paris, I set out for Aix, in Provence. Here I had the satisfaction of finding everything ready for my reception in an excellent house near the Wells, belonging to the Marquis Guidon, which had been engaged for me by my cousin, M. Worontzow; and here I had the still greater satisfaction of finding my friend, Mrs. Hamilton, with her father, the archbishop; her brother, Dean Ryder; and their cousin, Lady Ryder.

As the parliament of Provence had been lately dissolved, Aix afforded admirable accommodations; and had drawn together, besides the friends I have named, other English families, among whom of my acquaintance were Lady Carlisle and her daughter, Lady Oxford.

The winter passed away most agreeably. I continued to improve myself in the English language, and made some pleasant excursions with Mrs. Hamilton to Montpelier, Marseilles, Hières, and along the royal canal.

I received several letters from Diderot;* one of which, alluding to the jealousies between the court and the parliament of Provence, which led to the dissolution of the latter, is particularly worthy of notice, as displaying a great deal of that vivacity, and at the same time depth of thought, which so strongly characterized his genius. The picture he sketches of the feelings which this event had occasioned, and of the consequences it was likely to produce, makes his letter a complete prognostic of what has since taken place in France.

At the approach of spring, we proposed an expedition into Switzerland; but the time we fixed on for leaving Aix was, unluckily, about the period of the Princess of Piedmont's journey to Paris, previous to her marriage with the Count d'Artois, which made it almost impossible to procure horses

* See Supplementary Correspondence.

for our purpose, as they were nearly all engaged for the princess and her suite; and the postmaster, besides, was so unmerciful in his demands as to insist on our paying double, and in advance, for every article.

Whether we should submit to this imposition or not became a matter of some consideration with us all, and induced us to delay our journey a few days, in which interval our postmaster consented to rather less unreasonable terms, and agreed to furnish me with five horses and four bullocks, for which I was to pay him beforehand, at the rate of sixteen horses; and the rest of the party who followed in a day or two were to be supplied on the same terms.

Lyons, through which our route lay, was to be the scene of great festivity on the arrival of the Princess of Piedmont; and although I had not the least curiosity to witness it, I was unwilling to lose Mrs. Hamilton's society even during our journey into Switzerland, or to oppose her cousin Lady Ryder's wish of seeing everything that was to be seen of every description by the way; and therefore I consented to remain at Lyons until the show was at an end.

It was indeed a matter of no small gratification to be the companion of Lady Ryder. She was a little active woman, extremely animated in all her movements, and although between sixty and seventy years old, still possessed all the gaiety of youth, and could find an interest in everything. To a

great deal of wit she added infinite good-humour, an union of qualities which delighted as much in society as her many sterling virtues commanded respect.

I will not dwell on the circumstances of our journey from Aix to Lyons, as nothing occurred to merit observation. We made good use of our time after our arrival, in visiting the several manufactories which were then vying with each other to produce the most beautiful specimens of their art, as offerings to the Princess of Piedmont and her train.

A French duke, the captain of the guards, who had been sent as an escort on the present occasion, was already arrived, and had very politely ordered that the lodging engaged in my name should not be otherwise appropriated.

At length the illustrious stranger herself appeared. Every one was on tiptoe to admire the personage destined to become one of the royal family of France, and hastened to have an early presentation.

Enthusiastic loyalty was then the boast of this nation, and at that time of day, so little was the idea of a monarch associated with that of a guillotine, that Louis "the well-beloved," although waggishly called "Louis the misnamed" was still the object of national adoration.

As the duke whose civility I have just mentioned, and whose name, on account of it, I reproach myself for not remembering, had offered me a box at

the theatre, I went in company with Lady Ryder, Mrs. Hamilton, and Mlle. Kamensky, to one of the first representations, to which the Princess of Piedmont was invited; but unluckily, on being shewn to the box allotted to us, we found it filled by four Lyonese ladies, who remained fixed like statues, without speaking or moving, insensible to the repeated declarations of my conductor that the box was reserved for the foreign ladies of distinction. It was not worth while disputing the point, and therefore, leaving Lady Ryder and Mlle. Kamensky, who posted themselves behind these impenetrably ill-bred ladies, Mrs. Hamilton and I took our departure, little foreseeing the difficulties which attended our exit.

On reaching the porch of the theatre we found ourselves amidst the soldiers on guard, who were flourishing on all sides the butt ends of their muskets, to prevent the populace from rushing in, and in the excess of their zeal, or jocularity, levelled their blows so indiscriminately on the goers out as well as the comers in, that I received a stroke which might have been followed by others, and worse, had I not told my name in order to extort a little superficial civility.

The title of princess had the desired effect, and in bringing a thousand assurances of their being ignorant of my quality, gave me a pretty just impression of the true character of French politeness. The deference they paid my title, I replied, would

have been better transferred to my petticoat, which ought itself to have been protection enough against their attacks. To make amends, however, and to prevent a complaint, one of them escorted us through the crowd, full of submission for the ill-behaviour of himself and his comrades.

Lady Ryder at length consented to quit Lyons, and we proceeded on our route into Switzerland. I will not attempt to describe this beautiful country, which abler pens have made so familiar to all the world, and shall therefore only speak of the different persons, of any celebrity, with whom I happened to be acquainted. The principal one was Voltaire.

The day after our arrival at Geneva, I sent to beg permission to call on him, accompanied by my friends. Although very unwell, he assured me of the pleasure he should have in seeing me, and that I was at liberty to bring whom I pleased.

On the appointed evening, Mrs. Hamilton, Lady Ryder, Mlle. Kamensky, my cousin Worontzow, and Mr. Campbell of Shawfield, went along with me to his house. The night before, he had lost some ounces of blood, and, though very ill, desired it should be kept a secret, that we might not be deterred from the projected visit.

On entering his room, we found him lying back in a great chair, weak, and apparently in pain. I went up to him, and half-upbraidingly insisted that in his present situation our visit must be considered an intrusion, and that the most flattering proof I

could receive of his esteem was to be thought capable of appreciating the value of his health so far as to have suspended for some days the pleasure of his society.

He disconcerted me excessively by raising up his arm in a theatrical manner, and with a tone of astonishment, exclaiming, "What is this I hear? even her very voice is the voice of an angel!"*

As I came only to admire him, to be flattered so extravagantly was certainly the last thing in my thoughts, — which I believe I told him. A few compliments followed, and then we talked about the Empress of Russia.

After making a pretty long visit, when I proposed returning home he earnestly requested us to go to his niece Madame Denis's apartment, where he hoped we would indulge him with our company at supper. We agreed, and were not long with Madame Denis before we were joined by her uncle.

In a parenthesis it may be added, that, considering her as the niece of Voltaire, I was surprised to find her so very common-place a sort of woman as she appeared.

Voltaire was supported into the room by his valet-de-chambre, and placed on his knees in a great chair, over the back of which he leant, and continued op-

* I must here remind my readers that as this memoir will not appear till after my death, they must not tax me with vanity if, on this occasion, as on all similar ones, I repeat things just as they were said.

posite to me in this uneasy posture during the whole of supper time. This sort of constraint, perhaps, and the addition to our party of two rich farmers general from Paris, whose portraits hung in the saloon below, and to whom both uncle and niece paid the greatest court, disappointed a good deal the expectations I had formed from such a visit.

As we took our leave, Voltaire begged to see me often during our stay at Geneva. I requested permission sometimes to call on him in the mornings, and to enjoy his society tête-à-tête in his cabinet or in his garden—a permission which he willingly granted, and of which I frequently availed myself. At those times he was a very different creature, and appeared in reality everything which his works and my imagination had represented.

In the first few days that we spent at Geneva we made acquaintance also with M. Hubert, "L'Oiseleur," as he was usually called, from his love of hawking. He was a person of considerable genius, possessing a thousand agreeable talents: he was a poet, musician, and painter; and to infinite sensibility and gaiety of manners added all the charms of perfect good breeding. Voltaire was very much afraid of him, as Hubert well knew his peculiarities, and represented circumstances on canvas in which Voltaire recognised several of his own weaknesses of character. They used to be frequent combatants at chess. Voltaire was almost always the loser, and on those occasions he never failed to be put out of humour.

Hubert had a little favourite dog, with which he used to divert himself at the other's expense by making him snap at a piece of cheese, which, after two or three twists in his mouth, was turned out so exact a likeness of Voltaire, that one would have said it was a miniature copy of the famous bust of Pigal.

Our evenings were frequently spent on the beautiful lake of Geneva. M. Hubert, who was always of our party, directed these little expeditions, and had the gallantry to fix the Russian flag on the mast of the vessel. He was enchanted with the plaintive simplicity of our national airs, which Mlle. Kamensky and I used to sing to him, and which instantly became his own, from the astonishing quickness of his ear.

It was with unfeigned regret that we quitted Geneva and the many friends it contained. Amongst these was the family of a Mons. Welselovsky, a Russian, who having been employed by Peter the First at Vienna, and suddenly ordered to return to Petersburg, would not expose himself to the ferocity of his master's nature, but flying into Holland, renounced his country, married, and afterwards established himself at Geneva. His eldest daughter was wife to M. Kramer, the famous printer, who was as distinguished for his friendship as he was for his subsequent quarrels with Voltaire.

On leaving Switzerland we engaged two large boats for carrying us down the Rhine, one of which contained our carriages, luggage, and kitchen fur-

niture; the other was fitted up for our personal accommodation, and partly divided into little cabins, where we ladies slept under the safeguard of our two boatmen and servants, whilst the gentlemen went on shore in the evenings and contented themselves with such quarters as the country through which we passed afforded.

Whenever a town or any object of curiosity presented itself, we left our boat to view it; Mlle. Kamensky and I walking about in our black dresses and straw hats, unknown and unheeded by mortal, and sometimes, by way of amusement, purchasing provisions for the table from the country folks who came to the water-side. Mr. Campbell was our spokesman on these occasions, till by his continual mistakes I was encouraged to speak German, which, for want of practice, I was fearful of attempting; but after a few successful trials I was appointed by universal suffrage interpreter-general for the remainder of the journey.

We made a very agreeable excursion from our boat to see the famous Carlsruhe, a country-seat belonging to the Margrave of Baden, having hired a couple of carriages of the country to drive thither; but scarcely had we reached the inn, when the grand master of the court arrived with a complimentary message from their serene highnesses, and an invitation to visit the palace.

I made our excuses, as being unprepared in every way, intending only to spend a few hours in the park

and gardens, and having brought no other dresses than those we travelled in. He had not been gone more than an hour, when a magnificent carriage and six horses drove up to the door, with an equerry of the court, who came by order of the margravine to deliver a most obliging message. Her highness, he said, was perfectly aware that Madame Michalkoff was no other than the Princess Daschkaw, a lady whose acquaintance she was extremely anxious to form, and that having herself been created by the Empress of Russia a chevalier of the order of St. Catherine, she had hoped this link of fraternity would have led to a visit, which, if she was still forbidden to expect, she requested at least that her landau might be made useful to us in driving about the park, where her equerry would point out whatever was worthy of notice.

It was impossible to refuse this latter mark of kindness; we therefore seated ourselves in the carriage, while I tried to explain to our conductor how truly penetrated I was with such proofs of consideration from a princess so highly distinguished for her genius and acquirements.

We had just entered the first alley of the park when we perceived another equipage approaching, similar to the one which conveyed us. It contained the Margrave and Margravine of Baden, the hereditary prince, and others of the court. As it was impossible to pass, both carriages stopped, when the margravine saluted us, and with an ease and grace-

fulness which seemed perfectly natural, addressing herself to me, requested that she might herself be allowed to point out some of the beauties of the park, "of which we really," said she, "are extremely proud."

I immediately got out of the carriage, and having changed places with the hereditary prince, was driven with their serene highnesses through these beautiful grounds, which I could not, however, sufficiently admire, so much was my attention absorbed by the charms of the margravine's conversation; and we approached the palace before I once thought of an excuse for having declined to pay my court there; a ceremony I always acquitted myself of very ill, though in the present instance I found the utmost indulgence for everything.

A delightful concert, a splendid supper, but above all, the conversation and cordial politeness of our illustrious hosts, formed the entertainment of this agreeable evening. On attempting to take leave, our servants, we were informed, were already in the palace, where beds were prepared for ourselves, and that if it did not suit our convenience to make a longer stay, we were desired only to name the hour, and breakfast, horses, &c., should be at our command the next morning.

My friends and I, after being magnificently and, what is better, most comfortably lodged, quitted a mansion which had thus afforded us a very unlooked-for pleasure, and made considerable progress on our

return to the boat before any perhaps of its inhabitants had risen from their pillows.

Another of our expeditions was to Dusseldorf, to admire the famous gallery of pictures; but on subjects so universally known as these, and on local description in general, I have no taste for dilating.

I had much satisfaction at Frankfort in meeting Madame Weynacht, the widow of a banker who had resided twenty years in Russia. I had known her intimately in my childhood, and so forcibly did she recall the past to my mind that I delayed a day or two longer, to enjoy in her society the recollections she revived; so naturally does the imagination turn to, and dwell with pleasure on, first and early associations.

At Frankfort, also, I became acquainted with the youngest of the Orloffs, Count Wolodimer, a youth of shallow understanding, who derived no other advantage from residing in the German universities than to imagine himself possessed of all their knowledge. Such a notion gave him, as might be supposed, a most presumptuous and pedantic tone, the effect of which I experienced in the disputes—for conversations they could not be called—which he held with me. To dispute with every soul he met was his delight, and apparently his principal object; and one may easily imagine the bent and capacity of his mind, when there was not a wild sophism of Rousseau which he did not look upon as a profound truth, and indiscriminately adopt as

his own, with all the rhapsody of this eloquent but dangerous writer.

Little did I then imagine that he was to be placed at the head of the Academy of Sciences at Petersburg, or that he was to be succeeded by one of his creatures, M. Domashneff, equally ignorant and disqualified as himself; and still less could I have foreseen that I should have been their successor.

CHAPTER XIII.

Return to Spa—Prince Ernest of Mecklenburgh Strelitz and Prince Charles of Sweden—Character of the latter—Separation of friends—Singular pledge—Leave-taking—Berlin—Riga—Plague at Moscow—Arrival at Petersburg—Generosity of the empress—Character of the princess's father—Brightening prospects—Family arrangements—Further generosity of the empress—Illness of the young prince—Dr. Rogerson—Defeat of the Turks—Angelica Kauffman—Prince Potemkin—Celebration of peace with the Turks—Death of the old Princess Daschkaw—Coldness of the empress towards the princess—Prince d'Anhalt of Bernbourg—Marriage of the princess's daughter—Departure from Moscow—An accident—Travelling difficulties—Grodno—Warsaw—King of Poland—Prince Stanislaus—Spa.

On my return to Spa I made acquaintance with Prince Ernest of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, and Prince Charles of Sweden, since Duke of Sudermania, who had occupied part of the hotel I lived in at Aix-la-Chapelle.

The latter young prince was a victim to the rheumatism, on account of which he had been sent to Spa, accompanied by his tutor, M. Schwerin, with two military officers, a Captain Hamilton and another. He lived at very little expense, as his

travelling allowance was, I believe, extremely limited. I saw a great deal of him every day, and became perfectly well acquainted with his way of thinking. He was by no means fond of the queen, his mother; and his pleasure was in speculating on the probability of his being one day king, from the little chance, as he pretended to think, of his eldest brother, whom he did not love, having any children to inherit the crown.

From the knowledge I then acquired of this young prince's sentiments, I was afterwards, during our war with Sweden, impressed with an idea, which I communicated to the empress, that the prince in question, then Duke of Sudermania, and commanding the Swedish fleet, might, without much difficulty, be detached from the interest of the king his brother, and gained over to act against him.

As the time was approaching when my friends were to quit Spa for England, and that I was to return into Russia, we became extremely melancholy at the prospect of our separation. One evening, as we were strolling in the *Promenade de Sept Heures*, and lamenting the necessity which occasioned it, we observed the foundation of a large house which the workmen were beginning to build. I caught at this object, and in hopes of fixing some period of meeting again, to which we might mutually look forward, stopping short, I solemnly pledged myself to Mrs. Hamilton that in five years I would return to Spa, and be an inhabitant of that very

house, if she would agree to meet me. The engagement was mutually made, and most faithfully did I fulfil it, when, returning at the expiration of the abovenamed period, I took possession of the identical house, and was ready to welcome my friend on her arrival.

At length, after bidding each other a melancholy adieu, I returned by Dresden, where I remained a few days only, for the most part occupied in viewing and studying the pictures—a collection one can never cease admiring.

The electoral treasure, another object of curiosity, was at that moment scarcely worthy of a visit, as the chief part of it was in pledge to Holland, on account of money advanced by that power to the electoral court.

At Berlin I was received in the same gracious manner by the royal family as before, and I again experienced every mark of attention and kindness from our excellent minister, Prince Dolgorouky. I thence proceeded to Riga without delay, where letters awaited me from Count Alexander, my eldest brother, and from my steward, detailing most frightful accounts of the ravages of the plague which had raged at Moscow. My brother, I learnt, had been obliged to fly to his estate at Andrewoffsky, a circumstance which filled me with such apprehensions for his safety that the calamitous news of the state of my own household was comparatively less afflicting.

My steward announced the death of forty-five of my people. As the dreadful malady which swept them off was supposed to have infected everything in the house, none of my effects, he informed me, could be suffered to be removed to Petersburg, and such servants as survived were compelled to undergo a quarantine of six weeks before they could be sent away.

The shock I experienced at all this disastrous intelligence was such as to bring on a fit of illness, which detained me at Riga for three weeks, in a most painful state of mind, more easy to be conceived than described.

During this delay I wrote to my sister Paliansky, begging she would supply me with servants, as well as with an asylum in her house, until I could procure a lodging for myself. The house I formerly possessed at Petersburg had been sold by my uncle Panin, according to a commission I had sent him, believing this sale would raise a sum sufficient to cover the expenses of my journey, to which my income, or rather that which I had in common with my children, was certainly inadequate; but, unluckily for me, Madame Talitzin's influence so far prevailed with my uncle, that it was disposed of to a friend of hers for half its real value.

At length, having arrived at Petersburg, I repaired to my sister's house, and Mlle. Kamensky returned to her own. On hearing of my arrival, her majesty had the goodness to make inquiries respecting my

health and circumstances, and, on being informed of my late distresses, sent me a present of ten thousand roubles, for pressing and immediate occasions.

I had the satisfaction of seeing my father, and although from him I could not expect assistance of a similar nature, I experienced what was a thousand times more consolatory, every proof in his power to bestow of affection and esteem, of which a false and atrocious calumny, which it is now needless to particularize, had for a long time deprived me: I say, needless to particularize, because, on the points alluded to, my father at length, thank Heaven, did me justice, and because there is little satisfaction in reviving falsehoods in order to prove them such, when their consequences have ceased to give pleasure or pain. That I long experienced its effects in a way peculiarly distressing is very true; for to forfeit the good opinion of such a man as my father would to me have been very painful, even had he not possessed that claim to my affection which such a sacred title gave him; but in addition to this he had qualities which could not fail to inspire both love and admiration;—with a good and enlightened understanding he had a generous and benevolent soul, and was perfectly devoid of that sort of vanity and affectation which usually indicates feeble and small minds.

For some time after my arrival at my sister's I was very weak, and could not quit the house; but

I had the pleasure of perceiving my prospects begin to brighten, since Gregory Orloff, it appeared, was no longer the favourite of Catherine. As the situation of my house at Moscow rendered my return to it impossible for the present, I took a moderate-sized house at Petersburg, bought furniture, hired some necessary servants, and settled myself a little, though very far from comfortably.

As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I presented myself at court, and was received by her majesty with kindness. Not long afterwards, the empress sent me sixty thousand rubles, for the purchase of an estate which I could call my own. Perhaps until then she was ignorant that, excepting the marsh I had near Petersburg, and my house at Moscow, I had nothing belonging to myself personally in the world; or perhaps, being no longer under the influence of the Orloffs, she wished to give me some mark of her consideration, by rendering me more easy in my circumstances. Be this as it may, I was astonished at the gift, as well as at her change of manner, which was quite different from what I had been accustomed to from her majesty during the whole ten years which had passed since she ascended the throne.

This money afforded me an opportunity of rescuing my father from an embarrassment, by paying twenty-three thousand rubles to satisfy a claim which the court had preferred against him.

Towards spring I established myself in my little

country place, where I had the extreme pain to see my son suddenly taken ill of a putrid fever, with such alarming symptoms as to make me despair of his life. The medical people who had been accustomed to attend him having followed the court to Czarskoselo, I was strongly recommended to consult a young physician, Doctor Rogerson, who had lately arrived from Scotland. He was sent to me in the middle of the night, and though he did not disguise the danger of my little boy, he nevertheless did not despair of his recovery.

For seventeen days I never quitted his bedside; at the end of which time my son was out of all danger, thanks to Providence and the skill of this excellent physician, whom from that moment I began to esteem, and still have the happiness of ranking amongst my warmest and most valuable friends.

Whilst I was confined to my son's sick chamber, General Potemkin arrived from the army, with news of a complete victory gained over the Turks, and of overtures of the most submissive kind on their part for peace.

Circumstanced as I was, I could not go to court, as I wished, to congratulate her majesty on these brilliant successes; but I wrote to her, and sent with my letter, as an offering on the occasion, a picture by Angelica Kauffman, representing a beautiful Greek figure, to which the sentiments expressed in my letter in favour of the Greeks, and the prospect of their political amelioration, bore some

allusion. This was perhaps the first specimen of this charming artist, and more charming woman, which had appeared in Russia, and I was delighted to find that her majesty was extremely pleased with it.

About the autumn of the ensuing year, 1773, I went to Moscow, and found old Princess Daschkaw astonishingly well for a person of her age. I placed the money her majesty had given me in safe hands, for the benefit of my daughter, that nothing of the patrimonial estate need be taken from the possession of my son; and making all necessary arrangements, I went to Troitskoe, from whence every fortnight I took my children to Moscow to visit their grandmother, in order to prevent jealousies arising from any neglect of that necessary attention. In one of these visits to Moscow, whilst at the house of my uncle, General Yerupkin, I became acquainted with General Potemkin, who subsequently played so distinguished a part in Russia, and was created prince by the Emperor of Germany, on becoming the favourite and the friend of his sovereign.

Count Romantzoff was invested with full powers to make peace with the Turks, and in the course of the summer of 1775 the empress came to Moscow, in order to celebrate the event with the utmost magnificence. The honours and remunerations bestowed by her majesty on the Field Marshal Count Romantzoff, and the rest of the generals of the

army, were even beyond her former munificence. My brother, Count Simon, was promoted, and his regiment was advanced to the honour of grenadiers of the guards.

The empress made several excursions from Moscow during this period; amongst other places she visited Kaluga, and stopped some time at the beautiful seat belonging to my uncle, Count Ivan Worontzow. I was not of any of these expeditions, as I was at that time in constant attendance on my mother-in-law, the old Princess Daschkaw, who, after a painful illness of three weeks, expired in my arms.

The friendship and affection she latterly shewed me, and her approbation of all I had done respecting my children, fully indemnified me for every sacrifice of personal convenience. One of the last wishes she expressed was relative to her being buried in the monastery of *Our Saviour*, amongst the Daschkaw family, where her husband was interred. I solicited permission to this effect, but in vain; for unluckily a new regulation was in force, which prohibited the people of Moscow from burying their dead within the walls of the city, except in one convent only, (and each had its yearly turn in rotation,) as an indulgence to the rich and superstitious, who were unwilling to quit the town even after their demise.

Finding myself unable strictly to fulfil my mother-in-law's wishes, although feeble and out of health,

I resolved to accompany her remains, and to see them deposited in a monastery seventy versts from Moscow, where some of her husband's ancestors had been formerly entombed. This melancholy journey, which I could consider in no other light than as a duty, I undertook as such, in conformity with a rule which I had made for myself, and from which I never deviated since Prince Daschkaw's death,—viz., to act towards his relations in every instance exactly as under the same circumstances I concluded he would have done himself, prompted by a principle of respect and attachment which invariably influenced him.

Ever since my return from abroad I had lived, for the most part, in much retirement, comparatively at ease in my circumstances, from her majesty's bounty; but still at a very limited expense, in order that I might by strict economy provide for the education of my son in a foreign university.

Before her majesty set out on her return to Petersburg, the period having arrived for carrying my intentions into effect, I requested her permission again to go abroad for this special purpose. Her majesty gave her consent, but with the most inconceivable coldness, apparently discomposed at the idea of my seeking those advantages elsewhere which it was her great ambition to diffuse at home. Her coldness might have arisen from some other cause, of which, in truth, I was ignorant; but certain it is, I had no opportunity of taking leave of her majesty,

except in common with all the inhabitants of Moscow, who received a sort of general permission to kiss her hand, in a public hall appointed for the purpose.

On this occasion, Prince d'Anhalt, of Bernbourg, a near relation of the empress, thus expressed himself to me with some warmth :—" This conduct is what I expected, and is exactly of a piece with all the rest; but be assured, a time will come when things will alter, and when you will meet with a little more justice."

As I calculated upon nine or perhaps ten years' absence in foreign countries, for the completion of my son's education, I thought it advisable to embrace an opportunity which about this time offered, of establishing my daughter in marriage. A proposal was made by Brigadier Scherbinin, which, under all circumstances, I thought not to be rejected. He was a person of a grave, but very mild disposition, such as seemed to promise my daughter the peaceful enjoyment of domestic society; and though not in every respect the connexion I could have wished her to form, yet it afforded the inestimable advantage of having her for some time longer under my own eyes.

The idea I suggested of their accompanying me in my travels was readily met by my son-in-law's father, especially as I promised that they should live with me, which would render the interest of my daughter's fortune sufficient for their mainte-

nance. The criticisms and clamours that were raised against me on this occasion, however I might despise them, from the consciousness of my own motives, were not the only disagreeable consequences of this marriage; but as I am resolved to pass over everything that serves merely to awaken past sufferings, I will turn aside from the retrospect, and relate the progress of my journey.

We set out on the road to Pleskoff, in order to visit a beautiful estate in this government, belonging to M. Scherbinin the elder. An accident occurred on the road which gave me some alarm. A servant of Madame Tanieff, who was of our party, got a severe fall, and before it was perceived, two of our carriages on sledges unfortunately drove over him. No surgeon was to be met with, either at the end of that stage or the following one; and as the poor fellow was dreadfully bruised on the side and arm, although no bone was fractured, it was utterly impossible for him to endure the journey any longer. To bleed him seemed necessary, when, recollecting there was a lancet in an English portfolio belonging to my son, I entreated some one of the party would perform the operation, but none had the courage to undertake it. In such a dilemma I at length resolved at all hazards to attempt it; and overcoming for a moment my sensations of repugnance, I opened a vein so successfully that, although the effort was followed by violent spasms throughout my own

frame, I had sincere satisfaction in thinking I had been instrumental in saving my patient's life.

We arrived soon afterwards at M. Scherbinin's, where many of my daughter's new relations were assembled; but I was so much fatigued with their society that I made a very short visit, and proceeded onwards towards Grodno, in Lithuania.

As we pursued our journey, whilst passing through a barbarous and inhospitable country, where dirt and poverty universally reigned, without help, and without the least hope of obtaining any, my son was taken ill of the measles. To add to my difficulties, such was the unimproved state of the country that in order to make any progress through the forests, I was obliged to have thirty Russian cossacks half a day's journey in advance, to cut a passage for our carriage. At length we reached Grodno, where I had the good fortune and happiness to meet with an excellent physician, one who had been sent for by the king from Brussels, and attached to the corps of cadets established in that place. Here it was necessary to remain five weeks, as Madame Scherbinin, from her constant attendance on her brother, had herself caught the same disorder.

We continued our journey by Wilna to Warsaw. It happened to be the jubilee year, and if we did not find any brilliant entertainment to enliven us, I had the satisfaction of frequently enjoying the pleasing and instructive conversation of the king,

who came two or three times a week to my house, during a rather protracted stay at Warsaw, and on these occasions, usually sat with me several hours tête-à-tête, while his nephew, Prince Stanislaus, a very pleasing and well-informed young man, General Komargeoffsky, and the rest of his suite, remained in another apartment with my son and daughter.

During the course of these visits, I was forcibly struck with the great and amiable qualities of King Stanislaus Poniatoffsky. With a noble and feeling heart, he displayed a highly cultivated mind. His taste in the fine arts, for which he had an enthusiastic love, was strictly classical; and his conversation, supplied from such sources as these, could not fail to interest and please. His own natural bent and disposition would not, I think, have led him to that tottering eminence on which it was his ill fortune to be placed. As a private individual, no one was better qualified, both by nature and education, to bestow and enjoy happiness; but as the head of a turbulent nation, and of a still more unsettled constitution, he could never conciliate the affection of his people, because they were unable to appreciate either his character or his station. To the nobles of Poland he was an object of perpetual jealousy; and in consequence of the difficulty in which their intrigues involved him, he was forced into compromises with the two great potentates, his neighbours, which his principles

could not approve, but which necessity might justify.

The acquaintance I had with this distinguished and unfortunate personage, as well as with his amiable nephew, and the affectionate consideration in which the memory of Prince Daschkaw was held by them, made me quit Warsaw with reluctance, even for Berlin.

My reception at Berlin was of the most flattering nature. Whilst I remained there, I wrote to my banker at Spa, to secure that very house in the *Promenade de Sept Heures*, of which, almost five years before, Mrs. Hamilton and I had seen the foundation laid, and of which I literally became one of the first inhabitants, at the accomplishment of the prescribed period.

I had soon the happiness of welcoming my friend, who was not much less punctual to her agreement, and of experiencing that absence had not abated the cordiality of our attachment.

During our residence at Spa, M. Scherbinin received letters from his father and mother, requesting his immediate return to Russia. He was irresolute and unhappy, but as some determination was necessary, he resolved on obeying the summons, while my daughter decided on remaining with me, and continuing a part of my family.

CHAPTER XIV.

The princess determines to visit Edinburgh — Professor Robertson—Mr. Wilmot—Arrival at Edinburgh—The literary society of the day — Robertson, Blair, Adam Smith, and Ferguson—Journey to the Highlands—Mrs. Hamilton—Dangerous illness of the princess at Scarborough —Lady Mulgrave—Education of the princess's son—He takes the degree of M.A.—Visit to Ireland—Lady Arabella Denny—Her hospital of Magdalens—Excursions to the lakes—The princess leaves Ireland for London—Is presented at court—Conversation with Queen Charlotte—The royal family—The princess leaves England—Visits Holland—Supper with the Prince and Princess of Orange—Brussels —Prince and Princess Orloff—An unexpected rencontre—Prospects of the young Prince Daschkaw—Insolence of Prince Orloff—the princess returns to Paris—Diderot—Malsherbes—Madame Necker—Count Schouvaloff—His character.

I HAD now settled a plan of taking my son to the University of Edinburgh, and of fixing myself in that city during the whole period of his academical progress. With this view, I wrote to Principal Robertson, the celebrated historian, and having informed him of the desire I had conceived of placing my son, who was yet but thirteen years of age, under his auspices at the university, I begged to

have the advantage of his advice and instruction in whatever was necessary for carrying my wishes into effect.

Mr. Robertson, in answer, recommended a delay of two or three years, in order to give my son more time for preparatory studies; but, notwithstanding his extreme youth, such was my confidence in his abilities and attainments that I could, on this point, reply with truth, and consequently with no little pride and satisfaction, that he had already made himself master of Latin, had attained some proficiency in mathematics, history, and geography; and besides a knowledge of the French and German languages, had acquired a sufficiency of the English to understand all he heard and read, though not as yet to express himself in it with fluency.

As soon as the season at Spa was over we passed on into England, and making but a very short stay in London, proceeded on our way to Scotland. It was on this journey, at the house of Lord and Lady Sussex, where I spent a few days, that I formed the acquaintance of Mr. Wilmot, cousin-german of the latter, and father of my young friend, by whose persuasion I have overcome the repugnance which I formerly felt at the idea of writing this memoir. Mr. Wilmot remained with us the whole of the visit.

On arriving at Edinburgh, I engaged apartments in Holyrood House, the ancient palace of the Scottish sovereigns, where I often reflected on the

history of the imprudent and unfortunate queen, of whose affecting story every local circumstance, not forgetting her cabinet and the staircase close to my bedchamber, down which her favourite Italian was precipitated, continually reminded me.

I will not pretend to describe the gratification I felt on Mr. Robertson's assurance, after an examination of my son, that he was perfectly qualified to enter the university, and to commence the usual course of classical reading. On this point my satisfaction was now complete, and whilst my son successfully pursued his studies, I had an opportunity, too precious to be neglected, of cultivating the acquaintance of those distinguished men, whose writings have added so much to the literary honour of their country.

The very names of Robertson, Blair, Adam Smith, and Ferguson, are sufficient to denote the privilege and pleasure I enjoyed in their society. During the greater part of my residence in Edinburgh, I saw them two or three times a-week at my house, and on these, as on all other occasions, my admiration was perhaps as much excited by their modesty and simplicity of manners as by their powerful talents and information. Unlike mere pretenders to science and literature,—who are full of themselves and jealous of each other,—these celebrated and respectable characters lived together in the most perfect harmony and friendship; and their conversation, which was as free from pedantry of any sort as their

manners were void of affectation, never failed to communicate instruction and pleasure along with it.

Amongst my female acquaintance were the Duchess of Buccleugh, Lady Frances Scott, Lady Lothian, and Lady Mary Irwin; and nothing indeed seemed wanting to render this period not only the calmest but the most satisfactory and happiest of my life.

During the summer vacation we made a journey to the Highlands. The arrival of Mrs. Hamilton, after our return, added a new source of delight to the many others I at this moment enjoyed. It is true I was a great invalid, and suffered much from rheumatism, the consequence of my Highland journey; but surrounded as I was with friends, and above all, secure in the grand object of all my cares and wishes, the advancement of Prince Daschkaw's education, physical pain, to which I had been a good deal inured, was now scarcely any alloy to the portion of happiness I experienced.

The following year, however, as my indisposition had rather increased than abated, I was recommended by Dr. Cullen to try the waters of Buxton and Matlock, and afterwards to bathe at Scarborough. Accordingly, as soon as the next university vacation occurred, I left Scotland in order to visit those places, and to try the remedies prescribed. I was accompanied by my dear and valuable friend Mrs. Hamilton, whose affection was put to the utmost test, and was the means,

I may be allowed to say, of preserving my life, when I lay to all appearance on my death-bed at Scarborough.

I cannot refuse myself the gratification of speaking of Lady Mulgrave, and of the benevolent and generous consolation she offered when my recovery was considered hopeless. She was then living in the neighbourhood, full of grief at that moment for the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, when hearing of my situation, and judging from her own feelings what mine must be at the prospect of leaving my children in a foreign land, at a distance from their friends and connexions, she presented herself without ceremony at my bedside, and there, with all the warmth and earnestness of true benevolence, offered herself as a protector and her house as an asylum to my children, should they be deprived of their mother. This humane and generous offer was accompanied with a solemn assurance, that in case of the event to be apprehended she would allow no circumstances to separate her from my children until their guardians came to receive and to conduct them back to Russia.

Simply to mention this trait of feeling is perhaps the most impressive eulogy I can offer on the character of Lady Mulgrave. The sentiments of gratitude and admiration which it awakened on my part I will not attempt to describe. The attentions of this excellent lady were unremitted until my recovery seemed no longer doubtful; and when I was sufficiently well to travel, she engaged me to deviate

a little from the direct road, and repose a few days at her house on my return to Scotland.

This visit, which I had every motive both of gratitude and inclination to make, I accordingly accomplished, and reached Edinburgh by the time prescribed for the recommencement of my son's studies.

Although I experienced for some time afterwards several severe returns of rheumatism, and was in other respects an invalid, I did not suffer myself to relax in any of those exertions which, as a mother and a guardian, I thought myself capable of making; and in these respects so great was my success, and so amply were all my cares and sacrifices requited, that my mind was perfectly at ease, and in spite of bodily pain I could enjoy the society of my friends with cheerfulness and even gaiety.

My attention was not only alive to the more serious concerns of my son's studies, but also to those external advantages of exercise and amusement by which his health was improved and his strength wonderfully invigorated. Every second day he went either to the riding-school or took lessons in fencing, and regularly once a-week I had a little dance at my house, to dissipate and improve the intervals of study.

Living as it were but for one purpose, and having the paramount object of all my solicitude now within reach, the small fortunes of my children and my own poverty were circumstances of such com-

parative insignificance as to occasion scarcely any feeling of regret; and as all the necessaries of life were cheap in Scotland, I should not have had recourse to the extensive credit I possessed at my bankers, Mr. Hunter and Sir Wm. Forbes, but for an expedition to Ireland, which I had determined to undertake after my son's studies were completed. For this purpose I borrowed of these gentlemen two thousand pounds, which in a few months I had the pleasure of repaying from Holland; but though I acquitted myself of this pecuniary debt without difficulty, I owe to their kindness and friendship, which I experienced during an intimate acquaintance, a thousand obligations, for which I can offer no other return than my most grateful acknowledgments.

In the month of May, 1779, my son underwent a public examination. The audience assembled on the occasion was numerous beyond any former example, and so successful were his answers on all subjects to the questions proposed, as to call forth involuntary peals of admiration by clapping of hands, a testimonial scarcely ever permitted or practised on such occasions. The degree of Master of Arts was then conferred on him; and as my delight at a distinction acquired with so much applause can only be appreciated by a parent devoted like myself to the credit of a son, I will not dwell on this moment of my happiness, but continue the narrative of my subsequent visit to Ireland, which took place the following month, by the way of Donaghadee.

Here I was met by Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Morgan, who took me to see the Giant's Causeway and Coleraine, the former of which so truly merits observation. A commodious and handsome house was ready for my reception in Dublin, where I soon established myself. My residence in that city appears to this moment like a happy dream, which endured throughout an entire year. My enjoyment of life, however, was no illusion, for such were the affectionate attentions of my two friends, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Morgan, and of both their families, that they left me not a wish ungratified.

My son continued his classical readings every morning with Mr. Greenfield, who had attended him from Edinburgh; and we met with skilful masters in Dublin, who gave him lessons in Italian and dancing. Our evenings were always spent in society —a society distinguished by its wit, elegance, and good breeding, and animated by a frankness of manner peculiar to the Irish character. I continued my custom of giving a ball once a week for the amusement of my children, and we not unfrequently went to the theatre.

I cannot but speak with pride of the favourable regard shewn me by that inestimable person, Lady Arabella Denny, a woman so celebrated for her several beneficent institutions as to have merited and received the thanks of parliament for these her public services. We went very frequently to drink tea with her; and such was her good sense, and sin-

gular amenity of temper, that it was impossible to be at any time in her company without feeling oneself attracted and attached to her.

Amongst Lady Denny's many establishments for the relief and benefit of the unfortunate, the Magdalen Hospital was a principal object of her care, and, notwithstanding her great age, had still the daily advantage of her personal superintendence. She took me several times on these visits, and having much too favourable a notion of my poor abilities in every way, she begged me on one occasion to set a certain hymn to music, in order to have it sung at the Magdalen Chapel, in aid of a collection for the charity. As her wishes were a sort of law to my inclinations, I obeyed, and arranged an air for four voices, which, after a fortnight's practice, was sung in presence of a numerous congregation, attracted by curiosity to hear what a Russian bear was capable of composing. I went to see this interesting woman that same evening, and was received with even more than her accustomed affection. She spoke with delight of the morning's collection, and insisted upon it that its success was entirely owing to my music.

I had much pleasure during my residence in Dublin in frequenting the house of parliament, and hearing its most celebrated orators, amongst whom Mr. Grattan was one of the most brilliant and distinguished.

During the favourable seasons of the year I made some excursions with my two friends, to view the lakes of Killarney, Kilkenny, Limerick, the magnificent harbour of Cork, and other local objects of interest and curiosity. In the neighbourhood of the latter place I visited Lota, a beautiful and romantic seat belonging to Mr. Rogers, great uncle of my young friend, where I experienced the most polite and hospitable attention which a family full of talent, and in every respect truly accomplished, could bestow.

In the beginning of the year 1780 we left Ireland, and proceeded by Holyhead, through Wales, to London. Soon after my arrival I was presented at court, and was received with a graciousness and affability peculiar to their majesties. I did not allow this opportunity to escape of expressing the sense of gratitude I must ever feel for the happiness I had enjoyed in their dominions, but especially for that supreme advantage which none but a parent could appreciate — the benefit my son had derived from a British education. Her majesty complimented me in reply on the high character she had heard of me as a mother, adding, that she was now more than ever persuaded that she had not heard a word too much. I denied having any such pretensions, and spoke in return of her own fine family, which sufficiently evinced her majesty's tenderness. She told me she had a very

large one, and if it would be any gratification to me to see them together, she would have them sent for from Kew.

Having made my acknowledgments for this mark of gracious condescension, Lady Holderness was desired to bring them to London the next morning, and inform me of their arrival. She did so, and I had the pleasure of beholding a group of the finest children I had ever before seen.

I did not remain long in London, but visited different parts of the country, making short stays at Bath, Bristol, and some of the principal towns. Thence returning through London on our way to the coast, I had an audience of their majesties to take leave, and soon afterwards proceeded to Margate, where we embarked for Ostend.

From Ostend we continued our route to Brussels, where, having left some of our servants and baggage, we went by Antwerp into Holland, visiting Rotterdam, Delft, the Hague, Leyden, Haerlem, Utrecht, and the establishment of the Hernhutter brothers.

After this tour, having returned to the Hague, I again saw that estimable personage, the Princess of Orange, for whom I had long felt a very sincere respect and affection. I at first excused myself from accepting an invitation she sent me, having no other than my travelling dress to pay my respects in; but I was requested, through the governess, Madame Dunkelman, to waive all ceremony with regard to

the toilet, and to make my appearance in whatever dress was convenient. I needed no further solicitation than to receive this permission, and went, accompanied by my son and daughter, to sup with the princess, along with the lady who had been the bearer of her highness's message, of whom, by way of eulogium, it may be sufficient to say, that she not only enjoyed the full confidence of the hereditary Princess of Prussia, who had entrusted her with the care and education of her daughter, but that she was in such esteem with the great Frederick as to be one of his regular correspondents.

The Prince of Orange made one of our party at supper, and, contrary to his usual custom of going to sleep in company, he happened to keep himself awake during the whole evening. He placed himself at table next to me, and did me the honour to remark on the extraordinary change I had produced, —which I could only answer by lamenting that I had been the cause of any sacrifice on his part.

We supped every evening with the princess during our short stay at the Hague, and on leaving that place we returned to Brussels, where we had left our servants and baggage. Here we met Prince and Princess Orloff, who were on their way into Switzerland, where they were going to consult Tressot on account of the ill health of the latter.

The mention of this rencontre puts me in mind of what, in point of order, should have been spoken of before. On our little tour through Holland, I

stayed a couple of days at Leyden, to see some acquaintances I had made in my former journey. The first visit I paid was to the house of M. Gaubieus, a physician of some celebrity, for whom I had a particular esteem. On knocking at the door, the servant who opened it informed me that the doctor was not at home. "That is impossible," said I, "for I know very well that he has not stirred out of the house to-day; and as I flatter myself he would be disappointed in not seeing me, be so good as to say that Princess Daschkaw has called to renew her acquaintance with him."

The doctor, who was in the adjoining room, having heard my voice, came out, and as he opened the door I could perceive Prince and Princess Orloff in the room he had left, who had apparently been to consult him. My surprise was very great, for I had not heard the prince had left Russia, or in other words, had received his dismissal; nor indeed was it likely I should, as my correspondents were few, and such as entered little into the detail of passing occurrences.

With regard to public affairs, I was perfectly secure of their prosperity under the government of Catherine the Second, and as there was but one object, one desire, which absorbed my whole attention, and had separated me from my relations and other friends at home, I begged them to write to me of nothing but what concerned themselves and of their own welfare and happiness.

The pleasure I had in again seeing Gaubieus seemed to be reciprocal; but as I would not long interrupt his professional engagements, I shortened my visit, and took a walk through the town before I returned to the house of Prince Schehoffsky, where I had taken up my abode.

We had scarcely sat down to dinner, when who should enter but Prince Orloff! Whether my countenance, which, unluckily for me, is a great tell-tale, gave him to understand that his visit was as little agreeable as it was unexpected, or that he, according to custom, blundered out whatever idea happened to be uppermost, I know not; but his manner and speech were such as astonished the whole party.

"I am not come," exclaimed he, "to offer hostilities, but as a friend and ally."

Every person was silent, when Orloff, regarding my son with attention, and then addressing himself to me, perhaps, as I thought, with some feeling of compunction for his former conduct, "I see, madam," said he, "by his uniform, that the prince your son is still in the regiment of cuirassiers; and as I am still commander of the horse-guards, (for I wish you to understand that I travel only for the benefit of my wife's health,) I will write, if you please, to the empress, begging that your son may be removed into my corps, which will give him, as you know, two additional steps of military rank."

I thanked him, and then rising from table, and

making my excuses to the company, I requested he would accompany me to another room, where I should be glad to have some conversation with him on this subject, which, in truth, was for no other purpose than to refuse an offer which I did not choose to accept, with as much delicacy as I could, — a motive which, it is very probable, he did not at all comprehend.

After expressing my thanks for his good intentions towards my son, I told him that, circumstanced as I was, having written to the minister of war, Prince Potemkin, on the subject of his promotion, I did not feel at liberty to permit his exchange into another regiment until I received an answer to my application, as such precipitancy might defeat the good intentions of her majesty, and give some sort of offence to Prince Potemkin.

"How should it give him offence?" said he, evidently a little piqued.

I could easily understand the footing on which these two princes stood together; and therefore, having repeated that I had written to the war minister, and in such a case I ought to wait his answer, I hastened to conclude a conference which seemed but a loss of time, by asking where I should address a letter to him on receiving an answer from Petersburg, and begging him in the meantime to preserve his good intentions towards my son, which I might, very probably, have occasion to claim.

"You may depend upon my services, madam,"

said he, " for it is impossible to see a handsomer young man than Prince Daschkaw."

This observation on my son's beauty, with which Orloff took his leave, gave rise at the moment to a very indignant sensation, and afterwards proved to me a source of considerable inquietude.

At Brussels, as I have before stated, I again met Prince Orloff and his wife, with an addition to their party of M. and Madame Millessino, Mlle. Pratassoff, one of the maids of honour, and Mlle. Kamensky. The first intimation I had of their arrival was the sudden appearance of the whole party in my chamber; and I must confess I had no great satisfaction in the sight of any of them, except of old Millessino, a well-informed and very amiable person, whom for several years I had been in the habit of seeing almost daily at my house.

It was necessary, however, to divide my attentions a little, when Orloff, staring at my son, as he had done at Leyden, suddenly exclaimed, to my inexpressible confusion and embarrassment, " What a pity, Prince Daschkaw, that I am not likely to be at Petersburg on your arrival there, for as I am sure you will supplant the present favourite on your first appearance at court, I should have much pleasure in exercising the office I now hold, of consoling the discarded ones, if it should be, as I have no doubt it would, in consequence of your admission into favour."

Without giving my son time to reply, deeply

regretting that such an audacious address should have reached his ears, I made an excuse to send him out of the room, requesting that he would write a note to Dr. Burtin in my name, to appoint the next morning for visiting the neighbouring hills in search of fossils. As soon as he was gone, I expressed my astonishment to Prince Orloff that he could speak in such a strain to a young man not seventeen years of age, and compromise the honour and dignity of her majesty in such a manner. As to favourites, I bade him recollect that I neither knew nor acknowledged such persons, and that this was a subject which I would never suffer to be renewed in my presence, much less in the presence of my son, whom I had brought up with sentiments of the utmost veneration for the empress as his sovereign and godmother, never, as I trusted, to know any other. The reply he made was with his characteristic coarseness, and, consequently, unworthy of repetition.

Shortly afterwards I had the satisfaction of seeing him quit Brussels, where I remained another fortnight, in order to make some arrangements with the banker to whom I had ordered remittances to be addressed. We passed this little interval chiefly in botanic researches on the neighbouring hills, with my friend Dr. Burtin, where we met with several plants unknown to us in Russia.

As soon as possible I proceeded by Lisle to Paris; and on arriving at the *Hotel de la Chine*, where I had

engaged apartments, I was delighted to find that Orloff and his party had already set off for Switzerland, with the exception of my old acquaintances, Millessino and his wife, who remained behind.

I cannot express the satisfaction I enjoyed in again seeing Diderot, who received me with his former cordiality.

I renewed my acquaintance also with M. de Malsherbes and his sister, as well as with Madame Necker, and a few others, from whom I had experienced many attentions during my first residence in Paris.

Amongst the foreigners there at that time were several Russian families, some of my acquaintance, such as Count Soltikoff, since field-marshal and governor of Moscow, and his countess; M. de Samoiloff, nephew of Prince Potemkin; and Count Andrew Schouvaloff. The latter had lived two years in Paris, but would have enjoyed, perhaps, a higher consideration there had his residence been of a shorter duration, and had he, in consequence, been less understood.

As I suffered some very keen though not very lasting uneasiness, of which this personage was the author, it may not be deemed much out of place to sketch the following outline of his character. He was certainly a man of wit, with great quickness of parts, and a wonderful facility in writing verses. He was tolerably well informed, especially in French literature, being perfectly acquainted with the lan-

guage, and had the French poets at his fingers' ends: but he was too precipitate and capricious in his nature to have any sound sense or steady judgment. Full of selfishness and pride, he was harsh and overbearing to his inferiors, and proportionately mean and obsequious to the great and powerful; ever ready to worship whoever happened to be the idol of the day. Vanity at length turned his head, and he died unlamented even by his own family.

CHAPTER XV.

Paris—The queen and the princesses—The Abbé Raynal—Private interview with the queen—Her fascinating manners—Her love of play—Unlucky mistake of the princess—Gossip of the coteries—Diderot—Literary society of Paris—Talleyrand, De la Rhulliere, Guibert, &c.—Absurd calumnies against the princess—Their origin in Prince Orloff and Count Schouvaloff—M. Samoiloff and Prince Potemkin's conduct to the princess—The Marshal Biron—Anecdote of him—The princess quits Paris—M. Ostervald—Geneva and Lausanne—M. Hubert — Reception at the court of Turin—Fortress of Allessandria—Genoa—The governor, Count Firmian—The princess visits the lakes—Parma, Placenza, Modena, Florence, &c.—Pisa—Il Juoco del Ponte—The Baths—Mode of life there—The princess gives a ball—Leghorn—Quarantine Hospital.

My time in Paris was taken up much more than I wished, in receiving and paying visits,—a great many being visits of ceremony, which were the more irksome, as the proposed length of my stay allowed no time to be unnecessarily lost.

I was often pressed to go to Versailles, but my answer was, that I never was so much out of my element as in a court, where I always fancied myself a mere *Ninette*.

It was also announced that the queen had a wish

to see me. I still, however, excused myself from attending the drawing-room, on a plea of etiquette; for as all the French peeresses took precedence of foreign ladies, I did not choose to compromise the dignity of my sovereign or that of her court, at which I took the highest place as lady of honour to the empress, by taking the lowest at the court of Versailles.

One morning, whilst at breakfast with the Abbé Raynal, whom I often visited, I was informed by Madame de Sabran, one of the party, that her majesty wished to see me at Versailles, at the house of Madame de Polignac, whither she proposed going on a certain day, when, all ceremony apart, we might meet and converse mutually at our ease.

On the day appointed I went there with my son and daughter, and found the queen already arrived. Her majesty, with the most graceful condescension, came forward to receive us, and having placed me by her side on a sofa, and my son and daughter at a little round table near it, she addressed us with so much affability as set us completely at our ease, and absolutely captivated us all. Among other little civilities, she complimented my son and daughter on their proficiency in dancing, in which accomplishment she said it had been told her they were perfect. "For my part," added her majesty, "I grieve to anticipate the loss of so favourite an amusement which I soon shall be obliged to relinquish."

"And why, madam," I could not help saying, "should you feel such a necessity?"

"It is," replied she, "because one is not permitted to dance here after five and twenty."

According to my usual awkwardness of a *Ninette à la cour*, forgetting what I had heard twenty times, that the queen had a decided passion for play, "I can never approve," said I, "such a prohibition; for as long as the inclination lasts, and the feet do not refuse their aid, I should have no idea of not gratifying a taste so much more natural than its usual alternative—a love of play."

Her majesty expressed herself to be perfectly of my opinion, and we continued to converse on a variety of subjects, luckily for myself, without reflecting on the awkward observation of which I had been guilty, and without her majesty's betraying the slightest mark of having noticed it herself.

Not so, however, with the beau monde of Paris, of which there was not a circle the next day but was occupied with comments on my unfortunate blunder; and as it was generally looked upon in the light of a reprimand on her majesty for a propensity already severely censured, I could not but regret my thoughtlessness, notwithstanding the sort of consequence I might derive from thus making myself talked of in all the coteries of Paris.

One of the court carriages conveyed us home from Versailles; and whenever I met Madame de Polignac or Madame de Sabran afterwards, I was

sure to receive some polite message on the part of her majesty, through whose special permission my son had an opportunity of seeing the establishment of St. Cyr, to which men were not generally admitted.

Diderot, although in a declining state of health, was with me every day. Our mornings were for the most part spent in examining the works of the best artists, except on those days when my son received lessons in mathematics from a scholar of D'Alembert's, or in dancing from M. Gardel; and in the evenings, when I remained at home, I had always a little circle of our acquaintance.

Houdon, the statuary, occupied a good deal of my time, to whom, at my daughter's desire, I sat for my bust in bronze as large as life. When it was finished I could not help observing that the artist had too much taste to make a likeness; for instead of the simple Ninette that I was, he had shaped me into a flaunting French duchess, with a laced cap and an uncovered neck.

At Madame Necker's I became acquainted with the Bishop of Autun, as well as with M. Guibert, who had gained so much celebrity for his treatise on Tactics; and there I also met De la Rhulliere, whom I had known in Russia during the revolution, but whose visit I did not receive when I was first in Paris, for the reason I have before related.

Observing him to appear a little embarrassed from the recollection perhaps of this circumstance,

I addressed him as an old acquaintance whom I was exceedingly glad to meet; " for although," said I, " Madame Michalkoff (my assumed name in my former travels) was invisible to everybody, Princess Daschkaw,—who has too good an opinion of you, and too much pride, to doubt that those whom she considered her friends in 1762 could at any period ever cease to be so,—will always be glad to see you, with one self-reservation only, that she must deny herself the pleasure of reading your book, whatever loss she may sustain in doing so, or however interested she might be in its perusal."

De la Rhulliere appeared very well pleased with this reception, and visited frequently at my house afterwards. I had been assured by M. De Malsherbes, and Madame Necker, his sister, as well as by several others who had read this work, and even by Diderot,—whose natural sincerity, to say nothing of his friendship for me, entitled everything he said on such a subject to implicit credit,—that I had been noticed throughout in the most honourable manner. Not so, they informed me, with the empress, concerning whom I was told of some passages which, as I believed them untruths, I could not hear without disapprobation and disgust.

My astonishment may easily be conceived when, twenty years after, at the period of the French revolution, that epoch of rage, discord, and indecency, when men spoke, published, and did whatever the worst of passions dictated,—my astonish-

ment, I say, will be conceived when I found a book in print, entitled, *A Memoir of the Revolution of 1762, by De la Rhulliere,* in which I found myself represented as the mistress of Count Panin, and the object of other calumnies no less contradictory than foul! I found also some circumstances of a public nature so misrepresented that, after a little reflection, I was induced to believe that the work in question could not have been the genuine production of De la Rhulliere. No one but the most ignorant novice in our state affairs could have advanced an assertion like the following, which appears in this work,—viz., that it had been stipulated, on the marriage of the empress, that in case of her surviving her husband the sovereign power of Russia should pass from his hands into her own. Now this was an absurdity which De la Rhulliere—a man of sense, who had been for years in the office of foreign affairs, with access to the best sources of information—was, in my opinion, as incapable of publishing or stating as, from his knowledge of my morals and attachment to my husband, it was impossible he could have been the author of any scandalous attacks upon my reputation.

For my own part, as far as respected De la Rhulliere, I consoled myself with the idea that either the work itself was a forgery or, at least, that the passages in question were the spurious interpolations of some unprincipled editor; an idea of which I am still so strongly possessed that I have never thought of

taxing the memory of this writer with the baseness or folly of putting forth a slander which neither he nor any of my acquaintance could have received as truth.

I heard one day from Diderot that Falconet and his pupil, Mlle. Collot, were in Paris, and having been acquainted with these two celebrated artists in Petersburg, whilst employed on their chef d'œuvre, the statue of Peter the First, I requested they would spend the following evening at my house. They both came, and in the course of conversation I was informed by Mlle. Collot that she had very lately been engaged in a warm dispute on my account with a ci-devant governess of Count Shouvaloff's children.

Rather curious to know how I came to be the subject of a misunderstanding between two parties with one of whom I was quite unacquainted, I begged her to explain what had passed between them.

Her antagonist, she told me, whom from what followed I soon guessed to be the echo of Count Shouvaloff's malevolence, of whose character I have before given a faint sketch, spoke of me as having filled my son with the noble ambition of being favourite to the empress, and as having conducted his education with a view to this purpose solely; nothing, however, her informant added, was wanting to disappoint my expectations but to make them generally known and talked of.

Mlle. Collot, who sufficiently knew me, and the sort of consideration, in a moral light, which I held in Russia, was perfectly indignant, it appeared, and jealously defended me against such an attack. With regard to favourites, I believe she, as well as most people in Petersburg, was aware that the contempt I manifested towards these gentlemen was uniform and undisguised, insomuch that the great Catherine herself, when I had access to her most private parties, and made a third person with the favourite in her presence, rendered such respect to my character as to impose a restraint on herself, in never treating him otherwise than with the same sort of dignified politeness she shewed to all the officers of her household.

This calumny, however, gave me uneasiness, from the idea that a report calculated to excite the reigning favourite's jealousy must, in its consequences, tend to retard my son's military advancement; and for him thus seriously to suffer even for an imputed crime of mine, threw me into such an agony, that Mlle. Collot was all amazement, until I explained the cause of my vexation, and traced its source to Count Shouvaloff and his persecuting malevolence. What augmented my apprehensions was, that a letter I had some time before written to Prince Potemkin had not been answered; a sort of negligence, I had the vanity to think, he would not have hazarded but for the probable indifference of her majesty to me and my concerns.

As soon as Mlle. Collot was gone, I despatched a message to Millissino, begging to see him that same evening. He good-naturedly came, and after being informed of the subject of my chagrin, afforded me very seasonable consolation. "You are very wrong, princess," said he, "to give yourself the least trouble about such an absurd rumour, which I can easily trace to its origin, and as easily repel, having myself witnessed the best refutation possible, in the severity of your rebuke to Prince Orloff, on the same subject, at Brussels. But, madam, if you think fit to take any notice of what has now come to your ears, you may as well speak of it to our friend M. Samoiloff, who is on his return to Petersburg; for to him I heard Prince Orloff offer a bet at Count Shouvaloff's table, that Prince Daschkaw would soon be the favourite. Samoiloff, who was with me to-day, mentioned his intention of calling on you to-morrow; I will also, with your permission, call at the same time, and if in the course of conversation you will just advert to this subject, I, as having witnessed the progress of Orloff's scandal in several companies, as well as the so justly merited reprimand he received from you at Brussels, need only state what I myself know in contradiction of a falsehood quite unworthy of more serious notice."

The next day, when M. Samoiloff called, I followed my friend's advice, and made some allusion to these reports, which might, as I observed, ope-

rate very strongly to the future prejudice of my son. M. Samoiloff assured me that it was the well-known delight of Prince Orloff, as well as the taste of Count Shouvaloff, (whose genius for poetry might, in his instance, furnish some excuse,) to deal in the most extravagant fictions; "and if those gentlemen," added he, "can thus ensure one moment's diversion to themselves, they are perfectly unmindful of the consequences to others."

"But how," said I, "will it be possible to convince the public that an invention of Prince Orloff's should so readily gain credit with Count Shouvaloff as to excite his dangerous eloquence? or how suppress such reports without explanations on a subject absolutely unworthy of her majesty's notice, and certainly, I may be allowed to say, except in one respect, not more worthy of mine?"

"Believe me, madam," replied M. Samoiloff, "her majesty knows you too well not to be on such an occasion your best advocate herself. At all events I shall be at Petersburg long before your return, and, with your permission, I will recount to my relation, Prince Potemkin, all that I have now heard, as a caution against Orloff's insinuations. This," added he, "is nothing more than the common respect due to truth and to your character."

I thanked him for this testimony of his good will, and gratefully accepted his offered services. At the same time I could not but remark on the incomprehensible disrespect I had experienced from his uncle,

in his not having answered my letter—a sort of neglect, I observed, which Prince Potemkin must have known I was unaccustomed to, even from crowned heads.

M. Samoiloff said all he could to vindicate his uncle, protesting that he was incapable of such incivility, and that what appeared an omission on his part could only have happened through a miscarriage of the post.

The zeal which this young man had evinced in my justification made me desirous of shewing him any little attentions in my power, and I was glad to seize some opportunities of doing so which occurred. I had just got special permission from the court for my son to view some models of plans and fortifications, which I knew M. Samoiloff had long been very anxious to see. I invited him, therefore, to be of the party, and begged him to return with my son to dinner, and to accompany us, if he had no objection, to the opera in the evening. All this he did, and seemed perfectly delighted.

I was well acquainted with Marshal Biron, who gave me the liberty of occupying his box, both at the opera and at the French theatre. This old nobleman, who was one of the most polished men of the French court, and a most agreeable companion, took such a fancy to my daughter that she could say and make him do anything she pleased. Sometimes even, because she ordered it, I have seen him capering about the room, and singing, with the utmost

good humour, the well-known song, " Quand Biron voulut dancer, quand Biron voulut dancer," &c.

In the beginning of March we left Paris, taking the route of Verdun, Metz, Nancy, and Bezançon, on our way into Switzerland, and made a short stay at the principal garrison towns, in order that my son might not lose the opportunity of acquiring such military information as the sight of these places afforded, having received full and most liberal permission from the court to see and examine everything we pleased of a public nature.

At Luneville we attended a review of the gendarmerie, which, though a very unusual compliment to private individuals, was expressly ordered for our amusement.

From Neufchatel we made some excursions, accompanied by M. Ostervald, who was so much celebrated for his contest with Frederic the Great in advocating the rights of the people. This most respectable old man, who was as much esteemed in private society for his good sense and many amiable qualities as he was distinguished for the dignity and fortitude of his public character, conducted us in our search after objects of curiosity in this delightful neighbourhood. He took us to visit the interesting village *Le Locle*, and *La chaude Fonte*, and some of the grand points of view of the surrounding scenery, and added very much to our enjoyment by his instructive and agreeable conversation. I purchased several books at his printing office—in the

labours of which he had much assistance from his daughter—and ordered them to be addressed to my banker's at Amsterdam.

I found many of my old acquaintance both at Berne and Geneva. At the latter place I was welcomed by M. and Madame Kramer, and by my friend M. Hubert, of whom I have before spoken—a man of genius and talents, whose society I had much enjoyed in my former journey. He presented me with a portrait of Voltaire, which he had himself painted, and we separated not without mutual regret.

It was with a melancholy pleasure that I revisited Geneva and Lausanne, places which so sensibly renewed the recollection of my dear friend Mrs. Hamilton, and of that happiness I had tasted in her much-cherished society.

We travelled by the way of Savoy and Mount Cenis to Turin, and were very well received at court by the King and Queen of Sardinia. As no Russian minister was resident at that time, we were presented to their majesties by the British ambassador, a son of Lord Bute, and nephew of Mr. M'Kenzie, whom I had known very well in London; and by the king's orders we were shewn everything in Turin which usually engages the attention of travellers.

It happened whilst we were there, that a young Livonian noble, a subject of the empress, who was a student at the royal military academy, was on the point of being expelled and sent home in disgrace,

in consequence of some fooleries and misconduct of which he had been guilty. I interceded for him, and obtained his pardon; but I sent for the young man, and having lectured him most unmercifully on the subject of his offences, I recommended him to the notice and protection of Mr. Stewart, the English ambassador, until his father, who enjoyed great consideration in Russia, and to whom I threatened to write, should think proper to recall him home.

The King of Sardinia prided himself exceedingly on the fortification which he had caused to be constructed at Alessandria, and especially in the works of the citadel, which no stranger was allowed to visit without a special order from his majesty. This permission the king was so obliging as to grant my son, who was thus empowered, on our way through Alessandria, to examine without exception every part of this famous fortress.

From Turin our route lay through Novi to Genoa, where we stayed several days, and took sufficient time to visit everything worth seeing in the environs of Milan. Count Firmian, minister of the emperor, was governor of this duchy, a most virtuous and enlightened person, and quite idolized in his government. We found an acquaintance with him of infinite value, for without his advice and assistance we should not have accomplished, at least not without great difficulty, an excursion to the beautiful lakes Maggiore and Lugano, and to the islands of Borromeo. He was so good as to direct us in the best

mode of travelling, and as no posts were established along the route we were to take, we found relays of horses ready as we proceeded, which had been provided by his order. Thus, without inconvenience or hindrance of any sort, we made a most delightful tour, and returned enchanted with the beauties of nature, and the recollection of what so well deserves the name of a terrestrial paradise.

The vast edifice, though but half finished, which one of the family of Borromeo had erected on these fairy lands, was much too extensive for the country residence even of a sovereign. It could have owed its design only to the enlarged ideas of the nephew of a pope; for in those days a pope was all-powerful, and his resources were commensurate with the extreme of prodigal magnificence.

We allotted two days each to Parma, Placenza, and Modena, and made a longer stay at Florence, where the gallery of pictures, the churches, libraries, and the grand duke's cabinet of natural history, detained us more than a week.

His highness had been pleased to order that I should be presented with a specimen, not only of the several petrefactions of the country, of which he had duplicates, but also of others from various parts of the world, collected by the great Cosmo di Medici, whose genius had illuminated Italy with the splendour of reviving science.

From Florence we went to Pisa. The commissary at this place gave me a dinner, and was so good

as to conduct us afterwards to the court-yard of the house of M. Rosalmina to see an ancient game, called " Il juoco del ponte," which was ordered expressly for my amusement. Two parties, designated by the names of their two parishes, " Santa Maria" and " Santo Antonio," were set in battle array against each other on the great bridge, in helmets and cuirasses, with a long flowing robe covering their armour. Their only weapons, offensive and defensive, was a sort of flat club, with two handles underneath, by which it was held.

All the people of Pisa are enthusiastic in this game, and the nobles frequently take part in it. It was formerly held every five years, but it is now growing into disuse, as the grand duke, without absolutely forbidding it, has succeeded in throwing as effectual an obstacle in its way, by making the forty-eight deputies of the two parties responsible for its consequences, by being chargeable with all the damages which may ensue, and in providing for the families of the sufferers, of every description, whether Pisans or the people of Florence and Leghorn, who take any share in the conflict.

This game, as may be supposed, has often led to disputes, and even duels have not been unfrequently the consequence. Not only the gentlemen of the country, but their ladies, become partisans on these occasions, and wear, for the day, the colours of their respective parishes. Hence mothers and daughters

would be involved in quarrels, if the marriages of the latter placed them under different banners.

From Pisa we proceeded to the Baths of Pisa, where we remained during the excessive heats, and the prevalence of *malaria*, so pernicious to travellers. I engaged the best house I could meet with, and having obtained permission to borrow books from the ducal libraries, as well as from those of several convents, I determined on a regular course of reading, which we followed systematically. At eight o'clock in the morning, after a slight breakfast, my son, daughter, and myself, seated ourselves in a large northern apartment, where we read by turns. About eleven, when the heat became intolerable, we were obliged to shut up the windows, and continued our studies by candle-light. We went to dress at four, dined at five, and then dedicated another hour to reading. When the sun was on the decline we opened the windows, and in the evening we walked on the banks of the canal. It was here only that we had a chance of breathing fresh air; but the walk was so uneven and incommoded with filth that at my own expense I had it cleared of every nuisance, neatly gravelled, and seats placed along it at convenient distances.

The heat of the weather was almost insupportable; and though in the night time we were relieved from a scorching sun, yet it appeared as if an evil spirit presided over Pisa, and by some pneu-

matic machine exhausted all the air which ought to have been inhaled by its inhabitants.

But notwithstanding inconveniences of this nature, I reflect on our nine weeks' residence at the Baths of Pisa with the utmost satisfaction; for perhaps, without vanity, I may affirm that my son, from his habits of diligence, and the interest with which we read, acquired during that period more information than young men of his condition usually attain by a whole year of study.

On the 28th of June, O.S., the anniversary of the empress's accession, I gave a ball in the public rooms, which was attended by all the nobility of Pisa, Lucca, and Leghorn. There were not less than four hundred and sixty persons present to celebrate the occasion of the fête, which was conducted, though handsomely, at very little expense. With the exception of this entertainment, and an excursion we made to see the boat-races on the Arno, our time at the baths was spent, with little or no variety, in the manner I have described.

From Pisa we went by Lucca to Leghorn, where we remained some time.

One of the objects which most attracted my attention at Leghorn was the new hospital for performing quarantine, built by the Grand Duke Leopold. I could not but admire the benevolent idea of such an establishment, but I was particularly struck with the order and regularity displayed throughout all its arrangements. Its commandant,

who had been directed by the grand duke to shew us everything we wished to see, accompanied us to view it, and seemed somewhat surprised at our courage in venturing to enter a place which, at that time, from some late arrivals, was considered infectious. I was not, however, to be alarmed by such apprehensions, for I made it a principle of duty never to yield to the little fears which so often deter one from some useful pursuit, and in this respect to give a practical lesson, whenever opportunity offered, which might help to strengthen the natural courage of my children. So many small difficulties, indeed, are continually thrown in the way of travellers, which laziness and cowardice are so apt to magnify that, without a principle of determination to surmount them, time and opportunities are for ever lost.

In visiting the quarantine hospital I nevertheless did not omit some useful precautions; but as we entered and passed through the different apartments we sprinkled our clothes and handkerchiefs with thieves' vinegar, and applied smelling bottles containing spirits of camphor to our noses. The worthy commandant, who accompanied us, perhaps a little against his will, shewed us every part of this edifice, and as he was ordered to answer all our inquiries, it seemed, by what followed, that he was ordered to make a report of our observations.

I expressed in strong terms my admiration of this establishment, and having observed that the

boundless conquests of my sovereign, as they brought us in contact with southern nations, might render us more exposed to epidemic diseases, I should have infinite pleasure in presenting to her majesty a detailed account of its rules and administration. It was more in the spirit of a compliment to my conductor, than with the expectation of having it gratified, that I expressed this wish.

In a few days, however, the plan and all its details were brought by the commandant, who presented them, as he informed me, on the part of the Grand Duke. I charged him, in return, to offer my most humble acknowledgments to his imperial highness for so valuable a communication, which I should transmit by the first opportunity to the empress, my sovereign.

The return of M. Levoff to Petersburg, who set out on his journey a few days afterwards, afforded me this opportunity. I wrote at the same time to her majesty, with the utmost confidence in her indulgence respecting my son's promotion, informing her of the disappointment I had experienced in not receiving an answer from her war minister, Prince Potemkin, to whom I had written a letter of inquiry eight months ago on the same subject. To receive no reply from her minister, I candidly avowed, did not hurt my pride, which was above humiliation, but it awakened a far more painful sensation, the apprehension of having forfeited her favourable regard. On this point I entreated

her to dissipate my alarm, and if she still felt an interest in my affairs, I conjured her to allow my son the advantage of seniority, which his nomination to the body-guards twelve years ago might entitle him to expect, that after the pains I had taken with his education, he might return to his native country with no less distinction than such as had marked his youthful progress through every part of Europe. With the courage which my anxiety inspired, in the conclusion of my letter I earnestly requested to know what I might be allowed to expect.

CHAPTER XVI.

Departure for Rome—The Cardinal de Bernis—Mr. Byers—Pope Pius VI.—Commencement of the Vatican collection—Mode of life at Rome—The Hon. Mrs. Damer—Anecdote connected with the Villa Farnese—Journey to Naples—Renewal of acquaintance—Mode of life at Naples—Mrs. Damer—Anecdotes—Sir William Hamilton—The Abbé Galliani—Presentation at Court—Pompeii—Suggestion of the princess to the king—The princess visits the summit of Vesuvius—Dangerous illness in consequence—Letter from the empress to the princess—Offers to make her son gentleman of the chamber—The offer declined—Return to Rome—Arrival there of the Grand Duke Paul—Journey to Venice—Count Marutie—Arrival at Vienna.

We went by way of Siena to Rome. Cardinal de Bernis, whose wit, good-nature, and politeness rendered him a most attractive companion, was one of the first and most agreeable acquaintances I formed. I had great pleasure in his society, which I very frequently enjoyed both at his house and my own. He appeared a little flattered at my reciting, on some occasion, one of his poetical epistles, which I had met with in a printed collection of his works.

I made also the very valuable acquaintance of Mr. Byers, a highly cultivated and well-informed

Englishman, whose passion for the arts had fixed him at Rome for the last five-and-twenty years. With a companion such as this, I dispensed with the tedious ceremony of a cicerone, which every stranger is here supposed to be in want of.

I saw the pope, Pius the Sixth, at St. Peter's church. He spoke to me with great condescension, and listened with satisfaction to the well-merited praises I bestowed on the noble enterprise he had projected, and had then nearly executed, of reclaiming the ancient road through the Pontine marshes.

I told his holiness I was not only bent on seeing the work, but that I hoped to have the glory of being the first to travel on it when I set off for Naples.

" You must be so good as to apprise me of your departure, then," said he, " a few days before, that I may have relays of horses stationed for your service, for there are no posts or accommodations of any kind established as yet."

He continued to speak to me for some time of the precious monuments of art which Rome contained, and spoke of them as a person much interested and conversant in the subject.

The idea of forming a museum in the Vatican was, as it appears, entirely his own, and he had already collected several fine pictures, statues, and vases.

I spent very little of my time at Rome in the great world, receiving and paying visits, but was

generally occupied much more to my taste. At eight o'clock in the morning, and sometimes earlier, we drove out to visit some curious object of art or of antiquity in the city or its environs, and seldom returned until three or four, when we took a hasty dinner, and were ready in the afternoon to receive the visits of several artists. Among these were the two Hackerts, who frequently brought along with them, one his etching instruments, and the other his crayons. Hamilton, too, was often of the party, with his colours, and thus, in an instant, my apartment became an artist's study, and our conversation took its character accordingly. I learned their opinion on various subjects of art which had engaged our attention in the morning; and my son took some lessons in etching.

I had here the good fortune to form the acquaintance of Mrs. Damer, a lady so justly celebrated for her skill in sculpture, and no less to be admired for her profound information and good sense, which, under the veil of a peculiar modesty, sought rather the disguise than the display of her acquisitions. She was at that time travelling with her aunt, Lady William Campbell. I more than once visited Tivoli, as well as the Villa Adriana; but what most occupied my time and admiration was that masterpiece of architecture, the church of St. Peter. Of all the arts, I had the most decided taste for architecture, and scarcely was there a moment's leisure, after my usual morning excursions, that I did

not devote to this grand edifice, contemplating some part of its beautiful proportions.

I once accidentally met there a young Russian painter, who had been educated in the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Petersburg, and I had great pleasure in recommending him to the protection of some noblemen, through whose permission he had access to several fine pictures, which he was allowed to copy.

One morning, as we returned from our usual pursuits, having an hour to spare before dinner, Mr. Byers proposed a drive to the Villa Farnese, to see—what we had omitted in our former visit—some very curious pieces of ancient sculpture which were laid aside in the cellars; and though in a mutilated state, he assured me they were most precious remains, and far more admirable than many of the more perfect works we had seen. We went thither accordingly, and in walking through the cellars my foot accidentally struck against what appeared to me a block of serpentine; I turned to Mr. Byers, and laughingly observed, that I had hurt my foot in the cause of what was not worth a wound.

"I am sorry," said he, "for the accident, but you are very much mistaken in imagining the cause of it to be a block of serpentine. What you see is a famous matrix of emerald, brought from Africa to the great Cosmo, by one of those scientific persons whom he employed in researches after such productions. All that you see here, along with the other

effects of this palace, according to the Farnese succession, will devolve on the King of Naples; and as they are here unacquainted with its value, it will be sold as verd antique, serpentine, or anything else of equal insignificance. If you like to be its purchaser, I would," added he, "endeavour to procure it; and by sawing it in two, I would make for you a couple of such tables as are not to be found in any sovereign's palace throughout Europe."

The idea of offering them to the empress instantly occurred, and I requested him to make the purchase. The two tables were in consequence soon made, and sent, a year after, from Leghorn to Petersburg; but the empress, notwithstanding my reiterated and earnest request, made a scruple of accepting them. I have since presented these two tables to his imperial majesty the Emperor Alexander, and they are now placed among the treasures in the Kremlin in Moscow.

I had the satisfaction of assisting Mr. Byers in the disposal of his valuable cabinet of *pierres gravées*, which he would not separate and sell in detail. It was her majesty the empress who, at my recommendation, made the purchase.

After a thorough and minute examination of Rome and its environs, not even omitting to see the horse-races, which appeared to me extremely ridiculous, and the theatres, which from men acting the parts of women were almost disgusting, we proceeded by the newly recovered road to Naples.

At Terracina we stopped to explore the harbour, which had also lately been reclaimed from the marshes, and observed a handsomely built stone wall, with large brass rings, at regular distances, affixed to it, for the purpose of fastening vessels, looking as bright as if they were new and lately in use. As an interesting object of curiosity which I wished to send to the empress, I begged my friend, Mr. Byers, to procure me a drawing of the plan and dimensions of this harbour, but requested to have it taken privately, as the pope, I understood, had not yet caused one to be executed for himself.

On our arrival at Naples I was much pleased with the house they had provided for me, which was beautifully situated on the quay, commanding a view of Capri and Mount Vesuvius. I found, also, several of my old friends;—our minister, who was envoy extraordinary, Count Andrew Razoumoffsky, Mrs. Damer, her aunt, and that respectable old man the Chevalier Sacromoza.

Our morning pursuits, which were of a similar nature to those which occupied us at Rome, were usually concluded in the studio of Mrs. Damer. There we generally found her employed with her chisel; but this was a sanctum in which she received only her particular friends; for her character was as devoid as possible of ostentation, and she made so little parade of her talents and learning that I remember one morning she was extremely disconcerted at my having observed a Greek work lying

in her room, full of marginal annotations in her own handwriting.

"You are well acquainted with Greek, then, my dear madam," said I, "and if you have concealed it from me in order to spare me the pain of humiliation, you ought to have recollected that I really am very ignorant, and make not the least scruple in confessing myself to be so."

She blushed, and seemed just as embarrassed as if she had been guilty of some reprehensible action.

I made acquaintance with the English minister, Sir William Hamilton, and his wife the first Lady Hamilton, at whose house I met the Abbé Galliani, and several men of letters, and artists.

The collection of various remains of antiquity which Sir William Hamilton had made was extensive and precious; but there was one thing only in his museum which particularly excited my envy, and that was, a star-stone ring. This species of gem, although accurately described by Pliny, was long considered by the learned as having its existence in the imagination only of that great naturalist; so prone are philosophers, and so convenient is the maxim, to doubt the reality of whatever we cannot demonstrate. It is certainly very rare, and the one to which I allude is, I believe, the finest known specimen in the world.

The court was at that time at Cazerta, where we were presented to their majesties by a Neapolitan lady, the Duchess of Ferolete, and were received

with great kindness. My son was sometimes of the king's hunting parties, but was more frequently employed with me in pursuit of the arts and antiquities, during which I made several purchases of pictures, prints, and pieces of sculpture.

Our evenings were always spent at the English minister's; and thus, from the constant occupation we found in the morning, and from the rational enjoyment of polished and enlightened society which we were sure of meeting in the evening, not a moment hung heavy on our hands, or passed without instruction or amusement.

It was with infinite interest that I contemplated those invaluable treasures from Herculaneum and Pompeii deposited at Portici. On the subject of Pompeii, I remember once taking the liberty of observing to their majesties, that if the whole city with its several streets were rescued from the cinders, and all the utensils, furniture, carriages, and whatever object of curiosity might be discovered, cleared from their incrustation, and replaced in the exact situation where they were found, a perfect image and illustration of antiquity might thus be presented, which could not fail to attract the curious from all parts of Europe; and by having it guarded and exhibited at a certain price, it might not only indemnify his majesty for the expense of the work, but become a valuable source of revenue.

His majesty, not recollecting, perhaps, that I understood Italian, turned to one of the lords near

him, and declared that I was a very clever sort of person,—that what I proposed was extremely reasonable, and much more worthy of being adopted than anything which had been hitherto suggested by the antiquaries, who professed to be such idolaters on these subjects. I found, too, by what followed, that his majesty took no offence at my freedom of speech; for without replying to my observation, "There is," said he, "a publication in several volumes, with plates of every curiosity found in Pompeii, which, as appertaining to so interesting a discovery, may perhaps be worthy of your acceptance, and if so, I will direct that it shall be presented to you."

I expressed my humble acknowledgments for the offer of what I prized much more than baubles, however valuable.

My visit to the summit of Mount Vesuvius had nearly cost me my life. Not being very well when I made the attempt, I found the fatigue attending it so excessive as to bring on a dangerous illness. I had never any great confidence in the medical art, and so little in the skill of Neapolitan physicians, that I resisted all persuasion to employ them. At length, however, at the earnest desire of my children and Mrs. Damer, I accepted the services of an English gentleman, Mr. Drummond, who, though not a professed practitioner, was in the habit of attending his sick countrymen, and acquitting himself with great zeal and success.

I must make amends for my prejudice in this instance, by acknowledging that I think he saved my life. The climate, and an attention to diet, in a short time completed my cure, and enabled me to resume my morning drives and rambles; but a restorative more efficacious than anything else was soon supplied in the kind attention of my sovereign.

A courier arrived with an answer to the letter I had written from Leghorn, in which her majesty assured me of her sincere and unceasing interest in mine and my children's concerns, and that on our arrival at St. Petersburg she would place my son on such a footing as she trusted would be satisfactory; in the meantime, that she would appoint him to the post of gentleman of the chamber, which gives the rank of brigadier. She thanked me for the plan of the hospital, which she spoke of with approbation, and expressed herself throughout the letter in a tone of graciousness which was highly consolatory to my feelings.

I lost not a moment in making my reply; and whilst in the liveliest terms of gratitude I endeavoured to convey the sense I entertained of her goodness, I earnestly entreated she would be pleased to revoke her intention of placing my son about the court. His education, I observed, inclined him to an active course of life; and as his taste pointed to the military profession, an appointment in the guards, in order to pursue its duties, and to qualify himself for its higher employments, was the object

nearest his heart, and the extent of my expectations. In concluding my letter I spoke of returning to Russia in less than a year, and of the happiness I anticipated in the prospect of again finding myself in the presence of her majesty.

From this period I was determined to expedite our return. Having therefore hurried over the few things which remained to be seen, and having taken leave of their majesties, we left Naples and returned to Rome. Here I enjoyed the society of my former intimates, the Cardinal de Bernis and Mr. Byers, for a longer time than I had ventured to hope for, in consequence of the expected arrival of the Grand Duke Paul and his duchess.

As I could not decently quit Rome at the moment they were announced, I prolonged my stay a little later than I had intended, in order to pay my respects, and to present my son and daughter.

Soon after their imperial highnesses set off towards Naples, we took our departure also, and proceeded to Loretto. Here we remained only six-and-thirty hours, and gave as much of that time as we could to see the wardrobe of the Madonna, and all her rich display of jewellery, the offerings of so many monarchs, among which I could not but particularly admire a set of emeralds of singular beauty, which had formerly been presented by a King of Spain.

We stayed two days and a half at Bologna, and paid our tribute of admiration to the chef d'œuvres

of that school; and after a halt of two days also at Ferrara, we continued our route uninterruptedly to Venice.

Our minister at this republic, Count Marutie, received us at his own house, which had been fitted up for the occasion with an extraordinary display of ostentatious magnificence. Much of this attention I must certainly attribute to a grateful recollection of some favours he had received from my uncle the grand chancellor, and not a little, I must confess, from what was very prevalent in his character—a principle of personal vanity. He had lately been invested by our court with the order of St. Anne, and among the numerous decorations heaped upon his mansion and its offices, the star or ribbon of this order, either in painting or in sculpture, was everywhere conspicuous. It is not for me, however, to reprehend a quality to which, as much as to his generosity, I may attribute perhaps the acquisition of two fine pictures by Canaletti which I now possess.

I procured at Venice some engravings of the earliest masters, which I wanted in order to complete a series I was forming, of specimens of the art, from its invention through its several gradations of improvement.

We rowed about in our gondola to see all the churches and convents, which contained many fine pictures; but as all these things are so well known, I will say nothing of what, nevertheless, interested

me on the spot in a variety of ways; and as descriptions and details of what has already filled many volumes has been avoided by me throughout the present memoir, I may be allowed, after barely noticing that we passed through Padua, Vicenza, and Verona, to carry the reader at once with me from Venice to Vienna.

CHAPTER XVII.

Vienna—Count Galitzin—The Emperor Joseph—Prince Kaunitz—Anecdote of him and Pope Pius VI.—The princess dines with him—Their conversation relative to Peter the Great—The conversation reported to the emperor—Interview of the princess with the Emperor Joseph—Departure for Prague—Dresden—The picture gallery—Count Bruhl's collection—Berlin—The King of Prussia's reviews—Prince Dolgorouky—Presentation at court—Extraordinary attention of Frederick to the princess—Anecdotes—Interview of the princess with Frederick the Great—Astonishment of his troops—Departure from Berlin—Kœnigsburg—Journey to Petersburg—Results of the princess's travels.

At Vienna we were received by our ambassador, Count Demetrius Galitzin, and in his kind and considerate attentions we soon forgot the fatigues and difficulties which attended part of our journey through the mountains of the Tyrol. Every convenience and accommodation we could possibly want, he had foreseen and provided, with that good-nature which made him much beloved in this city, to which a long residence had almost naturalized him. His manners were those of a French courtier of the last age; and though his natural capacity was very

moderate, a thorough knowledge of the world which he had acquired, together with a studied display of politeness, stood very successfully in the place of more solid attainments. Through his means we were soon made acquainted with all the beau monde of Vienna.

The Emperor Joseph was at that time afflicted with a disorder in his eyes, which, for fear of too much exposure to the light, confined him to his own apartments. I had little expectation, therefore, of having access to his majesty, although I was told by Count Keglovitch, an old acquaintance of mine who was much about his person, of some very obliging expressions on his part, testifying a wish to see me.

Prince Kaunitz, first minister of the emperor, called at my house, and left his card, a compliment, I learned, such as he was seldom known to pay. This vain personage had long held the highest offices of state, and had been subject to little or no control during the greater part of his life, either in the pursuit of business or of pleasure. During the reign of Maria Theresa, full scope had been given to all his caprices, as the empress well knew there was not a man in her dominions equal to him in ability and political knowledge. In the present reign he was held in no less distinguished consideration; and having acquired a sort of acknowledged power and habit of doing exactly as he pleased, he had become what is usually called a privileged person.

The following anecdote is related of the want of

decent ceremoniousness of Prince Kaunitz towards an illustrious personage who happened one day to be his guest. Pope Pius the Sixth, whilst at Vienna, was invited to dine at his house; but Prince Kaunitz, so far from imposing upon himself the smallest restraints even in his amusements, having gone that morning into the country, and taken his exercise in the riding-house longer than usual, was not ready to receive the pope at the appointed hour of dinner. At length, booted, and with a whip in his hand, he presented himself before his dignified guest, who had been some time awaiting his arrival, and with great unconcern continued in his morning equipment, doing the honours of his mansion, and until dinner was served, pointing out with his whip such of his pictures as he deemed most worthy of notice.

I returned the visit Prince Kaunitz paid me, and soon received an invitation to dinner, which I accepted on condition that it should be at an early hour, and punctually at the one appointed, observing that my health absolutely required this sort of regularity.

I will not pretend to say how he liked the idea of encountering a person who began an acquaintance by making terms with him; but on entering his house, at half-past three o'clock, I found him waiting to receive me.

At table he directed the conversation towards subjects connected with my country, and among

these it soon turned on Peter the First. To this sovereign he affirmed that Russia was under everlasting obligations, as its political creator. I begged leave to deny this position, and attributed the prevalence of such an idea to the error and prejudice of foreign writers, who were interested, as I conceived, in propagating an opinion which might, in fact, proclaim their own or their nation's encomium; for as Peter the First introduced a multitude of strangers into Russia, it was obvious the glory of his works must in some degree be shared by the instruments of this his pretended creation.

" Before the birth of this monarch, Russia," I observed, " had made great conquests. Cazan, Astrakan, and Siberia, as well as the rich and warlike nation known by the title of the Golden Horde, had long submitted to our arms, and long before even any of his ancestors had been called to fill the throne the arts had taken refuge and were cherished in Russia. We can boast of historians, too," added I, " who have left more manuscripts than the historians of all the rest of Europe put together."

" But, madam," said he, " you do not appear to reflect that it was Peter the First who drew Russia into notice and political affinity with the other great states of Europe, and it is only since this period that we can recognise its existence."

" A great empire, Sir," replied I, " such as ours, with all its resources both of wealth and power, stands in no need of aggrandizement from any

foreign aid, and when well governed, not only becomes impregnable in its own strength, but draws kingdoms towards it at its will. Besides," added I, "you must pardon me in observing that if the Russian empire was not recognised until the very recent period you speak of, it only marks the ignorance or folly of other European nations, which could themselves be indifferent to the existence of so formidable a power. To prove to you, however, that I am not unreasonably prejudiced, I am ready to acknowledge the merits of this extraordinary man. He had genius, activity, and an unfeigned zeal to promote the improvement of his country; but how were these qualities counterbalanced by his total want of education, and the tyranny of his outrageous passions! Cruel and brutal, he treated all, without distinction, who were subject to his sway, as slaves whom he believed were born to suffer. Had he possessed the mind of a great legislator, he would have permitted the example of other nations, the effect of commerce, and the sure reform of time, to have had their united weight in bringing about those improvements which he with violence introduced; or, had he known how to estimate the noble and respectable qualities of our ancestors, he would never have sought to efface the originality of their characters by the impress of foreign habits and manners, which he prized so much above our own. With regard to laws, this monarch," I continued, "after setting aside

the code of his forefathers, so often changed his own, with no other view sometimes, as it would seem, than to assert his right of doing so at pleasure, that they soon ceased to inspire reverence, and consequently lost half their power. The nobility as well as the slaves were equally the victims of his innovating frenzy; the one he deprived of their conservative tribunal, their only appeal in cases of oppression, and the other of all their privileges. And for what? To clear the way for the introduction of a military despotism—of all forms of government the one most hateful and pernicious. His vain-glorious aiming at the fame of a creator hastened the building of Petersburg by circumstances so little mingled with mercy, that thousands of workmen perished in the marshes.

"The nobles, too, were compelled to lend their assistance, not only in furnishing a continual succession of labourers to expedite the work without intermission, but also in causing houses to be built for themselves after the emperor's plans, whether they were in want of such habitations or not. One of his edifices, indeed, of great labour and expense, might have been spared, had it not been wanting to the glory at which the founder of the city aspired, and that is, an admiralty and dockyards on the banks of a river which no labour could render navigable for ships of war, or even for merchant vessels with the most moderate cargoes. Under Catherine the Second," I observed, "Petersburg had flou-

rished in a fourfold proportion, both as to its extent and the splendour of its imperial palaces and public buildings, which owed their origin neither to taxes, nor compulsory measures, nor to oppression of any description."

What I said seemed to make some impression on Prince Kaunitz, who observed in reply, perhaps to lead me further on the subject, that it was, nevertheless, delightful to contemplate a great monarch working with his own hands in a dockyard. "Your excellency," said I, "can certainly be but in jest; for no one can know better than yourself that the time of a sovereign ought not to be occupied like that of a simple artisan. Peter the First had the means of engaging, not only shipwrights and carpenters, but admirals also, from whatsoever country he pleased; and, in my opinion, he seemed to forget his duties as a sovereign when he spent his time at Saardam, working with his own hands, and learning the Dutch terms and idioms, with which, as appears in his edicts and all our marine phraseology, he afterwards corrupted the Russian language. In the same spirit, and from the same undignified views, he sent his nobles into foreign countries, personally to learn the several arts and trades in which our own was thought deficient,—such as gardening, farriery, and mining,—when with so much more advantage the nobles might have deputed some of their own people to seek the knowledge of these trades, and then to follow and teach them at home."

I here came to a pause, and Prince Kaunitz making no reply, I was not sorry to change the subject, lest I should be tempted to say all I felt on the over-rated merits of Peter the First.

I heard next day from Count Keglovitch, that the emperor had been informed of the conversation I have just detailed, in a little note of it which Prince Kaunitz gave him.

I had certainly done my best to combat Prince Kaunitz's prejudice, with that sort of ardour which not only the love of country but the love of truth inspires; but that anything I said should occupy the minister's attention, and furnish an object of interest or amusement to his sovereign, was an idea which my self-love had never suggested.

From that moment Count Keglovitch seemed more than ordinarily interested in his inquiries after the distribution of my time and the proposed limit of my stay. The evening before our departure he pressed me exceedingly to postpone it for a few days, as the emperor, though recovering from his complaint, was still confined to his apartments. I observed to him in answer, how little I felt at liberty to indulge my own personal wishes in matters of this nature; that I began and continued my travels, not for my own gratification, but exclusively for my son's advantage; and having, whilst in Italy, written to ask the King of Prussia that my son might follow in his train at the next

reviews, and having received his most gracious permission, it was necessary we should make no further delay, but proceed on our way to Berlin. It was my intention, I told him, to visit once more this evening the fine collection of natural history in the Imperial Gallery, and afterwards to sup at our ambassador's, Prince Galitzin's, where I hoped to find him of the party, as it would be the last opportunity I should have of seeing him, the next day being fixed on for our departure.

As soon as dinner was over, we repaired for the last time to this beautiful cabinet, and before our attention was diverted to any particular object I saw the emperor, with a shade of green silk over his eyes, approaching us. He came up, announcing himself with the utmost affability, and spoke in such flattering terms of his loss, as he was pleased to call it, in not having sooner made my acquaintance, that but for the good-natured politeness in his mode of address I should have felt extremely disconcerted. He talked of the Empress Catherine, and expressed sentiments towards her so consonant with my own as greatly enhanced the pleasure I experienced in this short interview.

In taking his leave the emperor apologized for having so long detained me from those favourite pursuits which led me to his gallery, and begged I would appropriate whatever specimens I pleased of which there were duplicates. I did not abuse this

liberal permission, but selected only a few from the mines of Hungary, and some other pieces from the different provinces.

We supped that evening at our ambassador's, and set off the next morning for Prague. Here we made a short stay, whilst my son acquired some general acquaintance with the details of the Austrian tactics, and examined the fortress of this place, as well as the one constructed for the defence of Bohemia.

I amused myself, in the meantime, in making a collection of petrified wood and some specimens of marble, which were to be bought on moderate terms.

From Prague we proceeded to Dresden, where we remained several days, and received some splendid entertainments from Prince Sacken. The gallery of pictures was, as on our former visit to this city, a never ending source of amusement. Count Bruhl's collection I found had been purchased by the Empress Catherine, and had furnished some noble additions to the many masterpieces of painting and sculpture with which this great sovereign, both a lover and patron of the arts, had enriched and embellished Russia.

As the period of the King of Prussia's reviews was fast approaching, we hastened our journey to Berlin. We experienced on our arrival there a renewal of every kind attention from the royal family, to whom my son was presented by our ex-

cellent friend, Prince Dolgorouky, who still continued his post as our ambassador at that court, and manifested on this as well as on all former occasions a very sincere affection for myself and my children. He introduced my son to all the foreign ministers, and took him to Potsdam, where he was presented by Count Goerts, the general adjutant, to his majesty.

The great Frederick received him with much graciousness, and signified his pleasure, in a very flattering manner, that my son should attend him at the review.

The king soon removed to Berlin, and the number of troops collected in the great park on the appointed days amounted to 42,000 men.

During these grand exhibitions of Prussian tactics his majesty, I understood, never allowed any of our sex to approach him, and that all female presentations were accordingly prohibited. He had the gallantry, however, on this occasion, to make an exception to this rule, and I was the privileged lady so much distinguished.

He did me the favour to signify that he should be glad to see and converse with me, and if I liked to see the review the princess royal could conduct me to the park, and place me in a situation where I should meet him. Count Finkerstein received orders to inform the princess royal of the day, hour, and place, appointed by his majesty.

On the morning named, her royal highness, since

Queen of Prussia, called at my hotel, and took me along with her to the park; but what was my surprise on reaching the point assigned, when the princess begged me to get out of the carriage alone!

"'Tis here, my dear princess," said she, "that he wishes to speak with you; but for my part, as I have not the least desire in the world to see the old curmudgeon, I will continue my drive."

To my great joy I found Prince Dolgorouky ready to receive me; and in half an hour afterwards his majesty, before he had dismissed the troops, rode up to the place where I was standing, alighted from his horse, and approaching me with his hat off, continued some minutes in conversation, to the great astonishment of his troops, who had never before seen him address a woman under similar circumstances. Soon after the king was gone, the princess returned to take me up.

The next evening, whilst at supper with the queen, who treated me not only with distinction, but with the affection and partiality of a friend, which I have to acknowledge, also, in the kindness I experienced from every member of the family, the Princess Henry very gravely insisted that I should be spoken of in history, as a person whom the king had made an exception to every general rule!

As my son was to attend his majesty on a military tour, it was agreed that we should separate, and

meet at a certain point on our northern route. Having made allowance, therefore, for the time this purpose required, I left Berlin not without regret; but, once in my carriage, I used such expedition as to reach the appointed place at the very moment the king was leaving it. His majesty waved to me in passing a very affectionate salutation, and observed (as I have since heard) to Prince Dolgorouky, that nothing but the cares of a mother like myself could produce such an exact estimate of time, as to have at heart the loss even of a few minutes separation from her son.

I found Prince Daschkaw enthusiastic in his admiration of the king, and of all he had seen in his military system, which he had taken due pains to comprehend.

The day after we took the route of Koenigsburg, through which place the king had passed. Here I had pleasure in hearing from General Mollendorf, the governor, that his majesty had mentioned my son as a young man of great promise, who would one day be an ornament to his profession.

We remained at Koenigsburg a few days, and then pursued our journey by Memel to Riga, where we also rested a short time at the request of the governor, General Brown. In this place, the capital of Livonia, my father's name was most deservedly respected. He had formerly supported the cause of the Livonian nobles in the senate, and shewn

himself a disinterested defender of their privileges, at a time when the nobles of Russia had lost their own. The wisdom of the great Catherine did not, however, in her reign, permit an inequality in these respects to subsist amongst subjects of equal pretensions, and consequently the Russian and Livonian nobles were afterwards placed by her on an equal footing.

After having quitted Riga we stopped only one night on the road, and arrived without any accident at Petersburg.

Thus ended an expedition undertaken with very moderate means, and requiring the fullest force of maternal affection to inspire sufficient courage for its accomplishment. The education of my son was the object, and in pursuing this I lost sight of intervening difficulties. I wished to preserve his principles untainted, and to withdraw him from a thousand seductions to which a young man is peculiarly the victim at home. The result of my reflections on this subject had determined me to take him abroad, and having once quitted Russia, I had little difficulty in making up my mind as to the country best suited to my purpose, and in preferring an English education to all others. That this could not be effected without incurring debt I had foreseen, but I looked forward with satisfaction to the power of discharging it by means of a few self-privations and a strict system of economy, corre-

sponding with the retired manner in which I proposed to live.

On these principles I began my travels, and had now the delight of returning home full of pleasing anticipations on the happy accomplishment of my wishes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The princess returns to Petersburg—General Paul Potemkin—Invitation from the empress—Dangerous illness of the prince—Princess visits the empress at Czarskoselo—Her reception — Prince Potemkin — Court etiquette — Adroit flattery of the empress—An imperial dinner-table—Promotion of the prince—Return of the court to Petersburg—The hermitage—Munificence of the empress to the princess—The Hetman Oginsky—Corruption of the Russian officials—Imperial concerts—Further munificence of the empress—Choice of a house.

In the month of July, 1782, I arrived at Petersburg; but having no house there I repaired to Kirriannovna, my country place, of which I have formerly spoken, about four versts out of town. My sister, Madame Paliansky, and her daughter, came immediately to see me. They were almost the only relatives I had at that time living in Petersburg, my father being resident at Walodimar, of which he was governor.

Two days after my arrival, having learned that Prince Potemkin was almost daily at his niece's house, the Countess Skavronsky's, which was in the

neighbourhood of mine, I sent a servant to him with a message, requesting that his nephew might be desired to call on me, through whom I would make known a little commission to her majesty, with which I was anxious to charge his highness. The next day Prince Potemkin called himself, but, unluckily, whilst we were from home on a visit to Count Panin.

The following morning, however, he sent his nephew, General Paul Potemkin, and through him I begged the uncle's services in procuring a special permission that I might present myself, as well as my son and daughter, to her majesty at Czarskoselo. I also requested him to inquire the result of Marshal Count Romantzow's application to the College of War, relative to my son's appointment as his adjutant; and, in fine, to learn what post in the army he was likely to hold.

In two days afterwards I received a visit from General Potemkin, who came to inform me that the prince, his uncle, had announced my arrival to her majesty, and had received her commands to invite me and my children to dine with her on the following Sunday, at Czarskoselo, and there, he observed, I should learn the particulars I wished to know, relative to Prince Daschkaw's promotion.

But I was in no situation to profit by her majesty's gracious invitation, as the very night before my son was attacked by a violent fever, and in a high state of delirium all night. Full of the most

agonizing apprehensions for his life, I forgot that I was myself an invalid, and, flying to his apartment, watched by his bedside all night, without taking the precaution of putting on my stockings, though suffering from rheumatism in my knees.

The next day I exerted myself so far as to see General Potemkin for a few minutes. This I did out of respect for the empress, and because I hoped to learn something from him relative to the advancement of my son.

After four days, during which time I admitted no other persons than my sister Paliansky, and my kind friend and excellent physician, Dr. Rogerson, my son was pronounced out of danger. I then began to feel my own rheumatic pains, which were soon, indeed, in some degree, allayed, but it was not until after a long and suffering convalescence that I entirely recovered.

The progress of my recovery was, I believe, retarded by my great impatience to see the empress, as I conceived that every day's delay in this respect was so much time lost to my son. I had made known to the empress, through Dr. Rogerson, who saw her majesty every Sunday, the state of my own health, which rendered me incapable of movement, a matter, as I begged him to express, which caused me most peculiar regret.

The moment I could persuade myself of having sufficient strength, I resolved on attempting a visit to Czarskoselo; and what will not maternal love

accomplish! I got with difficulty into my carriage, and though we proceeded slowly and with the utmost care, making frequent halts, I did not achieve this short journey without great fatigue and pain.

At length I found myself in the palace, in the hall of assembly, through which the empress was accustomed to pass on her way to chapel. I here rested myself, and was ready to meet her majesty as she advanced towards me. Nothing could be more kind and more cordial than the reception I experienced, and the manner with which she welcomed me on my return to Russia.

As lady of honour I did not scruple myself to present my daughter; the chamberlain in waiting did the like office for my son. Buoyant as were my spirits at this moment, I was ready to sink under the efforts I made to keep up with the empress, as she held me in conversation through a long line of apartments, although she slackened her pace, and sometimes stopped for my accommodation.

On returning from chapel I was too much overcome with fatigue to attempt accompanying her majesty; and having quietly remained behind, after requesting some of her suite to pass on, whose politeness would have detained them, I followed at my leisure.

Passing through the grand saloon I was accosted by Prince Potemkin, who begged to know what my wishes were respecting Prince Daschkaw, and what was the rank he then held in the army. "Her

majesty has long been apprised of my wishes, sir," said I, " and as to his rank, that is a question which I should conceive your excellency, as minister of war, best able to answer yourself. It is now twelve years since he received from her majesty an ensign's commission in the regiment of cuirassiers, at which time an order was given that he should be promoted in his turn; but as to the result of this order I am altogether ignorant; nor am I any better informed whether an application addressed to the college of war by Marshal Count Romantzoff, with a view of making my son his adjutant, has been attended to or not."

The prince left me rather abruptly, and I felt a certain degree of uneasiness on learning that he had set off instantly for town. Presently the grand marshal of the court came up and announced her majesty's orders that I and my children should dine with her.

Since the days of Peter the First the etiquette of our court had been regulated by that which prevails in Germany, allowing certain privileges to certain degrees of military rank, and absolutely withholding them from others. Knowing this, and never dreaming that an ensign could have the honour of sitting at table with his sovereign, I was much struck with the singularity of the message.

To gain as much rest as possible I stopped, and sat down till dinner-time in a room adjoining the one in which her majesty usually played at chess.

In passing through this chamber after dinner was announced, the empress accosted me, and raising her voice so as to be distinctly heard by the whole circle round her, "It is," said she, "my particular desire that your son should remain one day longer an ensign, and dine with me as such, in order to mark the distinguished consideration with which I regard your children above all others."

This little compliment was not without its effect, for I believe no other being could have given, with equal delicacy, so flattering a turn to the forgetfulness of a promise.

At dinner the empress placed me next her, and directed her conversation, during the whole time of it, exclusively to me. Though I felt tolerably well and in good spirits, I was unable to eat, which did not pass unobserved by her majesty. On remarking it, she spoke of the need I should have of a little repose, and that apartments were already prepared for me. I was glad to take advantage of this considerate attention, and was afterwards enabled to accompany the empress in her evening walk, when she again kindly accommodated herself to the pace of an invalid, and made me sit down and rest a little at every turn. Our walk ended, I got into my carriage, and was conveyed to Petersburg, fearful of remaining longer from home in so precarious a state of health.

The next day I received, by her majesty's order, the copy of an ukase, signifying my son's promo-

tion to the step of a captain *en second* in the Semenoffsky guards, which gave him the rank of lieutenant-colonel. My joy, scarcely exceeded by that of my son, was now at its height; and though I continued for some time extremely delicate, tranquillity of mind, with the aid of a beautiful season, restored my former health sooner than I had dared to hope.

When the court returned to Petersburg, which was earlier this year than usual, I went to return thanks for the promotion of my son. The empress received me with no less kindness than at Czarskoselo, and invited me to the theatre at the Hermitage on the ensuing evening—a compliment paid to few, as the apartments bearing the above name were then unfinished, and the theatre itself was very small.

The following day I took my son and daughter with me to dine with the first minister, Count Panin, whose country-house was at no great distance from mine. We had just dined, when an officer was announced with a letter for me from Prince Potemkin, written, as he informed me, by order of the empress, to communicate her intentions of bestowing on me a suitable estate, and one which I was desired to point out myself, as the lands at the disposal of the crown were, by a regulation she had lately made, no longer alienable.

I testified in reply a deep sense of gratitude for her majesty's intended bounty, expressing at the same time my repugnance at making a choice, when

anything she herself might please to offer would be, as such, the most acceptable and satisfactory in every respect.

Two days afterwards I received another letter from the prince, informing me that as the restrictions which her majesty had imposed on herself did not apply to the crown lands in White Russia, but, on the contrary, as she wished to place them under the control and administration of Russian nobles, if a property of this nature were such as I liked, there were estates in that province still undisposed of, more productive than most in the mother country, of which I might have the choice.

I had but one objection to make to this proposal, and this I urged in reply. "If," I observed, "it be true that even hereditary lords are accountable to the government for the exercise of those rights which have been derived from their ancestors, how much stronger must be the force of such an obligation on those who become proprietors of lands and subjects by the bounty of the sovereign! My conduct," added I, "in the administration of my children's concerns has been uniformly influenced by this principle, the advantages of which, to my infinite satisfaction, have been demonstrated in the increased industry, wealth, and happiness of the peasants over whom I have had charge; but that I could ever flatter myself with similar success in the management of people half Polish and half Jews, ignorant both of their manners and their language,

is little to be expected; and in foregoing the hope of improving their condition, I should lose half the pleasure of the possession."

Some letters passed between us on this subject, which ended with my declaration, that whatever her majesty might think proper to bestow would be considered by me as an act of unexpected and unmerited bounty.

After a few days, I received a letter from the first secretary, Count Besborodka, enclosing a copy of the ukase which endowed me with the burgh and dependencies of Krouglo, and a population of about two thousand five hundred peasants. This estate, which formerly belonged to the hetman Oginsky, was, when in his possession, very considerable, extending over a large tract of country on both sides of the river Droutza; but at the first partition of Poland, as this river was made the boundary of that portion of it which then took the name of White Russia, some fine forests and several villages, in fact, the better part of the estate, remained a Polish territory.

The empress, it seemed, was not made acquainted with this circumstance of its curtailment, and certainly conceived that the entire district of Krouglo was mine, and that her gift was nowise inferior to any she had bestowed on her first ministers and others of the principal nobility. That this was her impression was very evident from the remark she made when I went to court to return thanks. "I

am very happy," said she, "that I have given into your hands so considerable an estate, which Oginsky, its ungrateful possessor, so little merited."

This Oginsky had been long the enemy of Russia, sometimes even acting in open hostility, and latterly, though under many obligations to the empress, he had refused the oath of allegiance on holding lands under her majesty in White Russia. I often thought of the remark I have above cited, when, on visiting my estate the following year, I became acquainted with those circumstances of it which her majesty did not, and was not likely to know, and found, to my great surprise, the persons belonging to it so squalid, idle, and addicted to the excess of drunkenness, that they scarcely bore the appearance of human creatures.

There was not sufficient wood in the territory for the purposes of ordinary fuel, and in order to keep going the little distillery of spirits, it was necessary to have recourse to the neighbouring estates. There was no water carriage for provisions in case of need, and to the proportion of ten individuals there was but one cow, and one horse for the use of five peasants. Added to these unpromising circumstances, the population, including infants just born, was short of the estimated number, 2,500, by 167—a glaring proof of the negligence and dishonesty of the crown overseers, who, looking to no other object than to enrich themselves, are ready to connive at or countenance any abuse which brings money

to their purses. Hence it is that the peasants belonging to the crown are infinitely worse circumstanced than others of the same class in Russia.

With regard to the deficiency in the number of peasants which the ukase specified, an appeal to the senate would have procured me redress, without involving her majesty in the slightest trouble; but I deemed it best to be silent; and during the two first years of my possession I employed all the capital I could command in improving the condition of my property.

But to return from this digression. The marshal of the court signified to me her majesty's pleasure that I should attend her private concerts, to which none, not even the ladies of honour, were admitted, except by special favour and invitation. I mention this as one of the many little marks of preference lavished on me at this time; of no value in themselves, but which gained me some enemies, and raised me up at court as an object of envy, although my fortune was still below mediocrity.

The first evening I went to these concerts, on entering the room, I was immediately thus addressed by the empress:—"How comes it, princess, that you are here alone?" Her meaning I did not perfectly understand, until she added—"You are without your children; and I should be very sorry you should feel yourself here in the least degree put out of your own way."

Expression, which had at first failed me from not

perceiving the object of her remark, now came to my aid, and I thanked the empress in a manner which shewed me not insensible to her kindness.

I had then no house in Petersburg, and to avoid the expense of a hired residence, in order to economize my finances, and spare something for my son, I prolonged my stay in the country that summer as much as possible. One day her majesty asked me if I still remained in the country, and on being answered in the affirmative, observed, that I hazarded my health too much, now that the autumn was far advanced, by living in a house injured, as she imagined, by a serious inundation which happened before my return from abroad; "for," said she, "I must beg leave to remark, although at the risk of giving offence, that your country place is a mere marsh, well calculated to increase your rheumatism; and therefore I should have decided on purchasing the house of the Duchess of Courland, as a much fitter residence for you, had I not thought it best that you yourself should be consulted, in order to make a choice; pray, therefore, be at the trouble of looking at it, and should it be such as pleases you, I will charge myself with the purchase."

I assured her majesty of the deep sense I had of all her favours, and promised in the course of the following week to look at several houses, without giving the possessors to understand who was to be the purchaser. I accordingly went first to see the house pointed out by the empress, which was situ-

ated in one of the best streets, large, and superbly furnished, the price of which was 58,000 roubles. I afterwards looked at a house on the banks of the Moika, belonging to Madame Neledinsky, fitted up in a very plain manner, for which they asked 18,000 roubles less. I went no further, but fixing on the latter, I told Madame Neledinsky that in the course of a week I would decide whether to purchase it or not, requesting that in the meantime an inventory might be taken of the furniture, no part of which I trusted she would allow to be removed away. All this was acceded to, and promised on her part; but at the end of a week, when I went to make the purchase, I found, to my great surprise, that Madame Neledinsky had herself already quitted the house, and that the greater part of the furniture had disappeared. There was but one domestic remaining behind, from whom I found that no inventory had been made.

Although I was very indignant at such deceit, of which I little suspected the lady in question, and hearing from Prince Galitzin that he had seen her from his window, the week before, sending off her furniture to the house which she had just hired, I formed my resolution of bearing with this proceeding, without letting the town into my confidence, either to betray my own simplicity, or the exact opposite of Madame Neledinsky's conduct. I sent her word that as she had departed from her engagement, I felt myself released from any obligation to

be the purchaser of her house, but as she had left it, and hired another, I would still take it for one year, and pay her four thousand roubles, a larger rent than she could well expect for it under any circumstances.

This proposal was not altogether without a view to a certain little negotiation I wished to effect at court through Prince Potemkin; namely, instead of the gift of a house proposed by her majesty, to obtain the nomination of my sister Paliansky's daughter as maid of honour, an object I had much at heart, and one ardently coveted by my sister, who had lately in this respect met with an unlooked-for disappointment.

The next time I saw the empress, she asked if I had made choice of a house? "I have hired one for the present, madam," replied I. "And why not buy one?" returned her majesty. "Because," said I, laughing, "the purchase of a house is as serious a thing as the choice of a husband; one ought to reflect a great deal before the decision is made."

Thus the affair of the house rested for the present, very much to my own satisfaction, although to the great surprise of every one else, who had been acquainted with the extensive power I had received of making a choice at the expense of the empress. Every one persecuted me with inquiries and advice. One friend, in particular, very seriously assured me that I should certainly be duped by the court, as

I had been already by Madame Neledinsky. "No one," said my friend, "knows your motives, and how few would comprehend them!"

My reply to this, and to many other observations from various persons, sometimes containing more of irony than of friendship, was after the manner of a stupid German baron I once knew, who tormented everybody near him by his efforts to speak French, which he scarcely understood at all, and when he was assured that his language was unintelligible, his answer was, "What is that to me as long as I comprehend my own meaning?"

CHAPTER XIX.

Singular coincidence—A catastrophe—Mlle. Paliansky—Disinterestedness of Princess Daschkaw—General Lanskoy—Prince Potemkin—Court ball—An expedient—Mlle. Paliansky, maid of honour to the empress—Singular proposal of the empress—Conversation with her majesty—Princess Daschkaw made Director of the Academy of Arts and Sciences—Embarrassment—Pertinacity of the empress—Increasing favour of the princess—Visit from the learned professors—Reform in the academy—Eüler—First sitting under the female president—Honour to Eüler—Prince Viazinsky—The princess takes the oath of allegiance—Senatorial scene—Reforms in the academy.

I TOOK possession of my hired house, and soon found, from a nearer survey, that I had very little to regret in not being a purchaser of it.

Things were now going on very smoothly; I felt much at ease in all my domestic affairs, and twice a week I went to pay my respects at court.

One evening, I remember, whilst a party of us were assembled awaiting the arrival of the empress, and chatting together, the conversation happened to turn, among other things, on the destinies of human life, in which it was observed that good

fortune and happiness were inherent in the lot of some persons, whilst others, on the contrary, seemed born only to encounter difficulties and a succession of untoward circumstances. I bore testimony to the truth of this remark, which on many occasions, I observed, had struck me. "I have reason, indeed," said I, "in my own instance to complain of evils which the genius of ill-fortune delights to inflict on its victims, in the shape of accidents by land and by water; there is but one, I think, wanting to complete the series, and that is, to have my house burnt about my ears."

It was a most singular coincidence, for that very evening, when I returned home, I found a packet of letters from Moscow, containing one from my agent at Troitskoe, with intelligence, that as the workmen were putting the finishing stroke to my new house, some lighted coals had been left inadvertently in one of the rooms, which communicating with some of the wood-work, raised such a conflagration as reduced the whole pile to a heap of ruins.

With regard to my niece, Mdlle. Paliansky, I had Prince Potemkin's promise that my wishes should be accomplished. He had urged me much of late to delay no longer the purchase of a house, lest her majesty might conclude that the refusal of her offer arose from unwillingness on my part to reside at Petersburg. I went, therefore, to look at a house of the court banker, lately deceased, M. Fredricks, and agreed for it with the widow at the price of 30,000 roubles.

When I applied to her majesty for permission to be the purchaser, her orders, she observed, had long before been given to her cabinet, to pay the price of whatever house I might choose to fix on; and I must do her the justice to say, that in this choice I fell very far short of her liberal wishes and intentions, which were both implied in her immediately asking, why I could prefer a house so much inferior to the Duchess of Courland's, the one she had herself designed for me, and recommended.

Fearing that my motives of delicacy might be attributed to affectation, I replied, that the house I had chosen was on the English quay, where I was born, and as her majesty alone could make me value the existence I there received, the situation itself, associated with the idea of her favour, had a peculiar attraction, and such as had influenced my choice.

On this occasion I was in truth the dupe of my own disinterestedness; for the house I purchased was totally unfurnished, and though I saved her majesty more than half the expense she intended, yet I could not bring myself to utter a single word about the want of furniture, which at my own cost I began to supply, and for which, simple and inexpensive as it was, I incurred a debt of three thousand roubles; but as this was not the first case (nor has it, indeed, been the last) in which I have acted with similar folly, I made up my mind to hold my tongue and keep my own counsel.

The favourite, General Lanskoy, was barely civil

to me. Perhaps, indeed, my conduct towards him did not challenge any great good-will, and whenever he shewed me the commonest attentions, it was evidently the result of her majesty's orders. After the arrival at Petersburg of Count Andrew Shouvaloff, who immediately became his very obsequious parasite, he never omitted any opportunity of testifying towards me the utmost malevolence.

From Prince Potemkin I never failed to experience great kindness and consideration. Soon after the affair I have just alluded to, he informed me that her majesty having heard that I had incurred some debts, was anxious not only to discharge them, but, in order to prevent the necessity of incurring others, it was her wish to be at the expense of rebuilding and furnishing my house at Moscow.

I earnestly requested the prince to dissuade her majesty from this intention, and rather to recall to her recollection what I had taken the liberty of confiding to him relative to my wishes and those of my sister Madame Paliansky, the sight of whom every day in depression of spirits, from a change of fortune, to which I felt myself in a certain degree instrumental, from the occurrences of 1762, occasioned in my breast such painful sensations as all her majesty's munificence could not subdue.

On this subject nothing satisfactory occurred until the 24th of November, which was the *name's day* of her majesty. After the grand ball given at court on this occasion, I did not withdraw to spend

the remainder of the evening in the empress's apartment, as I had been accustomed, but seeing an adjutant of Prince Potemkin, I bade him go and tell his general, that I would not stir from the ball room, without a signal to do so from him, and that signal must be nothing else than a copy of the ukase, which was to enrol the name of my niece amongst those of the maids of honour.

I dare say those who remained in the room were not a little surprised to find me waiting there, long after the court had withdrawn, and could they have guessed the motive which detained me, as well as the result of my application,—for I gained the object I had at heart, though I lost the proffered boon of paying my debts and rebuilding my house at Moscow,—I should most assuredly have been again and again honoured, as heretofore, with the appellation of dupe.

After the expiration of a long hour, the same adjutant returned with the wished-for signal in his hand, from which he read the order appointing my niece Paliansky one of the maids of honour. I hurried away with the news to my sister, who was supping, I knew, that evening, at our cousin's Count Worontzow's, and had the gratification of seeing her in a perfect ecstasy of delight, at an event which established her daughter in the world with credit and consideration.

The following month there was a ball given at court, on some occasion or other, which I forget,

when her majesty, after her usual round, and addressing herself to the several ladies of honour and foreign ministers, returning to me, said, "I have something particular to say to you, princess, but it cannot be, I perceive, this instant." She then quitted me, and after again speaking to some of the ministers at the other side of the room, she suddenly stopped short amidst a little circle which had formed itself between the two lines of the assembled company, and having caught my eyes, beckoned me to approach her. I did so; and if I had really just dropped from the clouds, I could not have felt more amazement than I did at that instant, when her majesty proposed to appoint me Director of the Academy of Arts and Sciences!

My silence (for I was unable at first to utter a word in answer) gave her majesty opportunity to repeat her proposal, which she continued to urge with a thousand kind and flattering expressions.

"No, madam," I at length had power to reply, "it is not for me to accept an office which I am far from having the capacity to fill; and did I not think your majesty were in jest, I should say that if I could willingly stoop to render myself ridiculous, I could never consent to compromise your majesty's dignity and discernment by accepting an appointment for which I am every way unfit."

The empress, in order to overcome my scruples, affected to perceive in this refusal of her request a

diminution of that attachment to her which I had professed to feel. Every one, I believe, who has had the good fortune to approach her person, must have more or less felt the influence of that irresistible eloquence and address which she had always at command to gain or persuade.

With me she had no need to employ either, who, from a principle of affection as inviolable as it was disinterested, was ready at all times to obey her orders, if not inconsistent with the duty I owed myself. On this occasion she exercised her power in vain. "Appoint me," I replied, "directress of your majesty's washerwomen, and you shall see with what zeal I am capable of serving you."

"It is you," returned the empress, "who jest, in proposing to yourself so ridiculous an employment."

"Your majesty," said I, "imagines yourself well acquainted with my character, and yet you do not perceive the pride of such a proposal. In my estimation, the person dignifies the office, and were I by your appointment placed at the head of your washerwomen, I should be looked up to as holding one of the most distinguished places at court, and envied accordingly. It is true I am not initiated in the art of washing; but the faults resulting from ignorance in this respect are of no consequence, whilst, on the contrary, there is not a single error which the director of an academy of science could

commit which would not be injurious in itself, and reflect discredit on the sovereign who made the nomination."

Her majesty, notwithstanding my objections, persevered, desiring me to call to mind the several persons who had filled this office, and to confess that their capacities and qualifications for it were inferior to mine.

"So much the worse," said I, "for those who could respect themselves so little as to undertake a duty which they were incapable of fulfilling with credit to themselves."

The eyes of all the court were now directed towards us.

"Well, well," replied her majesty, "let matters rest as they are for the present; though, as to your refusal, it only confirms my opinion that I cannot possibly make a better choice."

This conversation almost threw me into a fever, and my countenance, I believe, betrayed the utmost agitation, to judge from the effect it produced on others, who, with infinite satisfaction, seemed to conclude that something very disagreeable had occurred.

The old Countess Matuchkin, who seldom attempted to control her curiosity, was very eager to inquire what was the subject of so animated a conversation with her majesty. "You perceive," said I, "madam, what a state of agitation I am in, and

yet, in truth, it is her majesty's kindness and too great partiality which have alone occasioned it."

I most ardently longed for the ball to be over, that I might, before I went to bed, write to the empress, and still more strongly urge the motives of my refusal. On my return home I instantly sat down to write a letter, which was such as perhaps might have displeased any other monarch than Catherine. I told her, without reserve, that the private life of a sovereign might pass unnoticed in the page of history, but that an injudicious and hurtful nomination to a public office never would; that Nature herself, in making me a woman, had disqualified me for the direction of an academy of science; and feeling, as I did, my own literary insufficiency, I had never sought the distinction of being admitted into any learned society whatever, not even when the opportunity offered at Rome of purchasing it for a few ducats.

It was almost midnight when my letter was finished, which was no time to send it to the empress; but being a great deal too impatient to rest a night without formally getting rid of a proposal so very absurd, as it seemed to me, I set off to the house of Prince Potemkin, whose door I had never entered in my life, and having sent in my name, I begged he might be told that I must see him, even if he were in bed.

It happened that he really was in bed. I told

him what had passed that evening between the empress and myself.

"I have already heard it from her majesty," said he, "and I well know her sentiments on this subject. She is fully possessed with the idea of placing the Academy of Science under your direction."

"It is impossible," replied I, interrupting him, "that I ever can accept such an office without failing in every duty I owe myself. Here is a letter which I have written to her majesty, containing my refusal; read it, prince, and I will afterwards seal it and confide it into your hands, that it may be delivered to the empress as soon as she rises in the morning."

Prince Potemkin, after having looked it over, tore it to pieces! In utter astonishment and rage I demanded how he dared presume to tear a letter of mine addressed to her majesty.

"Be composed, princess," said he, "and hearken to me. You are sincerely attached to her majesty; nobody doubts it; why will you, then, distress and grieve her on a subject which for these last two days has occupied her thoughts exclusively, and on which she has absolutely fixed her heart? If you are really inexorable, here is pen, ink, and paper, and write your letter anew; but believe me, princess, in expostulating thus I am only acting the part of a man devoted to your interest. I ought, besides, to add, that in urging your acceptance of the place proposed, her majesty has the further object in view

of securing your residence in Petersburg, and of making it the occasion of a more frequent and more immediate intercourse between you; for, to say the truth, she is worn out with the society of those fools by whom she is eternally encircled."

My anger, which is seldom a very long-lived affection, had already subsided. I agreed to write a more moderate letter, which I would send by my valet-de-chambre, to be presented to the empress by one of her own attendants as soon as she awoke in the morning; and I entreated the prince to second with all his influence my endeavours to dissuade her majesty from so unprecedented and unadvised a nomination.

I began another letter to the empress the moment I reached home, and so much was I disturbed and agitated with the events of the evening that I continued to write and ruminate on them without once thinking of changing my dress, the one I had worn at court, until the morning. At seven o'clock I sent off my letter, and I received a note* from the empress in reply; in which, after a remark on my early rising, she said a great many flattering and obliging things, but not a word on the refusal of her request, which she affected, as it would seem, not to have noticed.

Towards evening of the same day, I received a

* See the note of the empress, beginning, "You are an earlier riser than I am, fair lady."

letter from Count Bezborodka, and with it a copy of an ukase which had already been transmitted to the senate, appointing me director of the Academy of Sciences, and at the same time annulling the power of a commission, under which its affairs had been lately administered, in compliance with a requisition of all the professors and other persons concerned, setting forth the misconduct of the late director, M. Domashneff.

Confused, and terrified almost out of my senses, I ordered my door to be shut to every one, whilst I continued to wander about the rooms, ruminating on all the various embarrassments and fatigues to which this office would expose me; and amongst its consequences, not least disagreeable in anticipation, was its probably leading to many little misunderstandings between the empress and myself.

In Count Bezborodka's letter was the following passage: — "Her majesty has commanded me, madam, to inform you that you are at liberty, either in the morning or in the evening, to confer with her on any subject relating to the department under your direction; and that she will be always ready to remove any difficulty or obstacle which may happen to occur in the discharge of your duties."

Here, then, I was in the situation of a beast of burden harnessed to an unwieldy and disjointed machine, without any regulating principle to direct my labours, not even the commission, of which I

have just spoken, which might at first, in setting me in movement, have been a material aid.

The first thing, however, which I took upon myself to do was, in sending a copy of the ukase to the academy, to desire that the commission should continue in force for two days longer, and that I should be furnished immediately with some account of the several branches of the establishment, of the business relative to the printing office, together with the names of the librarians and the superintendents of the various cabinets; that the heads of each department should next day make me a report of the duties they had to perform, and of everything committed to their respective charge. I begged at the same time of the commissioners, that they would be pleased to communicate every particular they could collect concerning the office and duties of a director, in order that I might form a general idea of what I had to do, before I attempted to act even in the merest trifle; and in conclusion, I begged these gentlemen themselves to believe, and to assure the rest of the academy, that I already had prescribed it to myself, as a first and most imperious duty, to preserve for every member of that learned body all the consideration and esteem which their several merits demanded.

I flattered myself that I should thus from the beginning avoid every occasion in this respect of exciting jealousy and discontent.

The next morning I attended the empress's toilet, where all her secretaries and chiefs of departments were assembled to receive her orders. Amongst them I was much surprised to see M. Domashneff, who accosted me, with a view of offering his service in the way of instructing me in the business of my office. Although I was amazed at his intrepidity, I answered him civilly, that in watching over the interests and credit of the academy there was one rule to which I should invariably adhere, and that was, to act impartially, and to bestow its honours and remunerations with a reference to no other claims than those of merit; and as to everything else, I observed, my present ignorance was such that I should have recourse to the guidance of her majesty, and the support she had indulgently promised.

Just at the moment he was beginning some sort of a reply the empress half opened the door, but, on perceiving us, closed it immediately, and rang the bell for her valet in waiting, who presently came to desire my presence in her majesty's chamber.

"I am very glad to see you, princess," said the empress, as I entered, "but pray tell me, what could that animal Domashneff have to say to you."

"He was giving me, madam," replied I, "some instructions in my new duties, in the discharge of which, although my integrity, perhaps, may not be so much questioned, yet my literary qualifications, I fear, will not bear the test so well as his; and

thus I shall be a loser by the comparison. I do not know, madam," continued I, "whether I ought to thank you for this mark of your good opinion of me, or whether, on the contrary, I ought not rather to condole with you for this strange and unheard-of creation, in making a woman the director of an academy of science."

Her majesty assured me she was not only perfectly satisfied with the choice she had made, but proud of it.

"This is truly flattering, madam," said I, "but the task of leading the blind will soon be irksome to your majesty."

"Cease, I beg of you," returned she, "to consider the affair in so ridiculous a light, and let me not hear you speak again in such a manner."

As I left the room I met the grand marshal of the court, who told me that he had last night received the empress's orders to invite me to dinner that day at her private table, at which I was requested to consider myself henceforth always a welcome guest, though perfectly at liberty in this respect to consult my own convenience and inclinations rather than her wishes.

I received abundance of compliments and congratulations on the proof I had just received of her majesty's favour and consideration; whilst some of my acquaintance, who saw me very far from elated by this unsought-for distinction, had discretion enough to spare such expressions as could only add

to my embarrassment. The effect, however, of this appointment on people in general was a feeling of jealousy; for a place of high honour or dignity was thought very unsuitable to a person whose habits and demeanour were so uncourtier-like as mine.

The third day after my nomination, which was a Sunday, I received a visit from the professors, the inspectors, and other officers of the academy. I told them it was my intention to go next day to the academy; and I begged them to understand that on all occasions, whenever they might wish to confer with me on matters of business, they had full permission to enter my house without ceremony.

The whole of that evening I was occupied in reading the several reports which had been presented, earnestly intent on gaining some clue to the intricacies of that labyrinth in which I was involved, under a full persuasion that every step I took would be a subject of criticism, and that I could not fall into the most trifling error without censure.

I made myself acquainted, also, with the names of the most distinguished members of the academy, and the next morning, before I went thither, I paid a visit to the celebrated Eüler, who had known me for many years, and had always treated me with kindness and consideration. In disgust with the conduct of Domashneff, he had ceased all attendance at the academy, except when opportunities offered of counteracting, in concert with others, the

ruinous effects of the late director's proceedings, which he had more than once represented by letter to the empress.

This learned person was, without question, one of the first mathematicians of the age. He was, besides, well versed in every branch of science, and such was his vigour of mind and habitual industry, that even after he had lost his sight he did not at all abate of his intellectual labours; but with the aid of Mr. Fuss, the husband of his grandaughter, who read to him, and wrote as he dictated, he prepared a variety of materials, which served to enrich the publications of the academy for several years after his death.

I begged of him to accompany me that morning, that on my first appearance at the head of a scientific body I might have the advantage and sanction of his attendance, which, if inconvenient or irksome to him, I promised never to ask on ordinary occasions. He appeared flattered at my request, and allowed himself to be conducted to my carriage by his son, the perpetual secretary of the academic sittings, whom I also invited, as well as his grandson, who had the task of leading the illustrious blind.

As soon as I entered the hall of their sittings, addressing the professors and members there assembled, I lamented my own deficiency in scientific attainments, but spoke of the high respect I entertained for science, of which M. Eüler's presence

amongst them, whose auspices I had solicited in conducting me to the academy, would, I hoped, be received as the most solemn pledge I could offer.

After having delivered these few words I took my seat, and remarked that M. Schteline, professor of Allegory, as he was called, had taken his place next to the director's chair. This gentleman, whose pretensions to science might, perhaps, be suited to the designation he bore, gained this extraordinary title and appointment in the time of Peter the Third, and with it the rank of councillor of state, which, answering to that of major-general, gave him, as he thought, a claim to the highest distinction amongst the members of the academy. Turning, therefore, to M. Eüler, "Sit down, Sir," I said, "wherever you please, and whatever seat you may happen to take, that seat must consequently be deemed the highest."

The lively feeling of delight and approbation excited by this unpremeditated tribute of respect to his talents was not confined to the son-in-law and grandson; there was not a professor present (with the exception of the professor of Allegory) who did not sympathize in their feelings, and with tears in his eyes acknowledge the merits and superiority of this venerable character.

From the hall of assembly I passed on into the chancery, where a registry is kept of everything relative to the pecuniary and economical concerns of the establishment. Here the superintendents

were at their posts, to whom I observed, that a general idea had gone abroad of the great neglect and malversation which had been suffered under the late director, such as not only to have exhausted the revenue of the academy, but to have left it in debt.

"Henceforward," I said, "it must be our common duty to redress these abuses; and as it is not necessary that any branch of the establishment should fall to decay, the most obvious and efficacious means in our power are, to apply exclusively to its own wants and advantages all the resources which the academy may possess. With this view, therefore, I am resolved neither to enrich myself at its expense, nor to allow the smallest peculation in any of the subordinate offices; and could I but persuade every one to regulate his conduct strictly by this principle, I should very soon be in a situation to recompense the zealous and deserving, by promotion or some addition to their salaries."

The Commentaries which had formerly been published by the academy, in two volumes quarto, yearly, had dwindled down into one, and were now discontinued altogether for want of the requisite types. The printing office and presses I found in the utmost disorder, and in want of everything to make the latter effective. It was one of my first cares to have them completely repaired, and to have such types provided as were fit and appropriate; and it was not long before two volumes of Commentaries were

again issued from the academy, compiled, for the most part, from articles which had been furnished by M. Eüler.

Prince Viazemsky, as holding the place of procureur-general of the senate, asked the empress if it was necessary that I should take the oath which is required of all who are admitted to any employment under the crown.

"Unquestionably," was her majesty's reply; "it is not in secret that I have made Princess Daschkaw director of the academy; and though I want no new assurance of her fidelity, either to my own person or to the country, this solemnity will be so far satisfactory to me, as giving all the sanction and publicity to the nomination, which I should wish it to have."

I had a message from Prince Viazemsky to this effect, who sent his secretary to say that he should next day expect me at the senate to take the customary oath. I was a little disconcerted at the idea of this public ceremony, although I knew very well that it was required of all, from the highest to the lowest, on their admission to the public offices, to give such an assurance of their fidelity. At the hour appointed, therefore, I went next day to the senate; and having to pass through the chamber where the senators sit in council, in order to arrive at the chapel, I found them all assembled and in their places. They rose as I entered, and some

with whom I was well acquainted came forward to receive me.

"Your astonishment, gentlemen," said I, "can only be equalled by that which I feel myself, at the cause of my present appearance amongst you—that I should come to swear allegiance to a sovereign who has for so long a time reigned over every affection of my heart. But a duty which custom has prescribed to all is indispensable in my case, and this it is which occasions the singular phenomenon of a woman within the walls of your august sanctuary."

When the ceremony was over, during which, as on all similar occasions, I was oppressed with the most painful sensations of awkwardness and timidity, I seized the opportunity of begging the procureur-general to furnish me with all the documents he had received, relative to the causes of discontent in the academy, in order that, by learning the nature of the complaints preferred against the ex-director, as well as of the explanation and justification offered by him in his defence, I might in some measure form an idea of the part I had to fulfil.

I had infinite difficulty in unravelling the accounts of the two species of funds which compose the revenue of the academy,—namely, the economic fund, which arises out of its savings and profits, and the government fund, which is derived from the state endowment. Both of these were exhausted;

and the accounts of each, which ought to have been kept separate, were mixed together in the utmost confusion.

The academy was in debt to the different booksellers of Russia, France, and Holland; but as I did not choose to ask her majesty for an extraordinary supply to answer these demands, I had recourse to the expedient of offering those books to sale which were issued from the academic press, at thirty per cent. lower than the established prices. From this source I had soon the means of paying these debts; and as the supply afterwards increased, I appropriated a sufficient sum to make good the arrears of the government fund, which was placed in the hands of the treasurer of state, the aforementioned Prince Viazemsky. The sums of money thus accruing, in ordinary cases, would have served to enrich the economic fund, which is entirely under the control of the director, as means of his own creation, and is usually employed in disbursements of which the necessity was not foreseen, and consequently not provided for in the original charter; such as in occasional gratuities, in purchases of new inventions, and in supplying the deficiencies of the other fund, even for prescribed purposes, which the increased price of every commodity might sometimes occasion.

I found but seventeen students in the schools, and but twenty-one young artisans educated at the expense of the academy. The numbers of both these I increased, the former to fifty, and the latter

to forty. I had the satisfaction of retaining M. Fuss, (the young man whom I have mentioned, grandson to M. Eüler, who wished to leave the academy,) and of increasing his salary, as well as that of M. George, another very deserving person.

In a little more than a year I had the power of raising the stipends of all the professors, and also of establishing three new courses of lectures in mathematics, geometry, and natural history, which were delivered gratuitously to all who chose to attend them, by a native professor in our own language. I often attended them myself, and had the satisfaction of knowing that the sons of some of the poorer nobles, as well as many of the junior officers of the guards, derived much benefit from the institution. The remuneration paid to each of the professors, at the end of each course, was two hundred roubles out of the economic fund.

CHAPTER XX.

Prince Potemkin and Prince Daschkaw—The princess's estate of Krouglo—Prince Daschkaw joins the army—Return of the Grand Duke Paul—Refusal of the princess to visit him at Gatchina—Her reasons—Return of Count Shouvaloff—Animosity of the favourite Lanskoy against the princess—The imperial bust—The academy—Prince Viazemsky—Projects of the empress for improving the roads—New cathedrals, palaces, and courts of judicature—New maps of the provinces—Return of Prince Daschkaw from the army—The Crimea becomes a Russian province—The princess projects the Russian academy—Discussion with the empress—Projects and executes the first Russian dictionary—M. Pallas—His vocabulary in eighty languages.

At the commencement of the year (1783), Prince Potemkin left the court for the army, and my son, whom he seemed to regard and to treat with much attention, accompanied him on his journey. Whilst passing through White Russia, they deviated from their route, in order to see with their own eyes, and form some judgment themselves, of my estate of Krouglo, the value of which had been as much exaggerated by some as it had been underrated by others.

On this subject Prince Potemkin wrote to me, and exhorted me to take courage, assuring me that it was capable of being rendered a very profitable possession. He had given directions, he told me, to Brigadier Bauer, who superintended some lands of his own adjoining to mine, to put the affairs of my property in a better train than they had been in under the overseers of the crown, and to contribute all he could to its improvement, both by his own interference on the spot, and by any information and suggestions he might think fit to communicate to me in writing. "There is, besides," said the prince in his letter, "a bourg, called after your name, Daschkava, which you ought to have, as an indemnification for the deficiency in the number of peasants specified in the ukase of donation."

In truth, it would have been no difficult matter to have obtained this addition, as the King of Poland, from a sense of obligation to my late husband, would not have hesitated, for my advantage, to effect an arrangement with his sister, its possessor during her life, and the nobleman who was next to succeed to it, both parties being equally indifferent about it: but Prince Potemkin would never hear of my writing either to the king himself on this subject, or to our ambassador in Poland, Count Stackleberg, wishing to arrange the whole business for me himself. The fact, however, is, Daschkava was never mine, nor had I any other remuneration for the deficiencies of Krouglo.

The separation from my son could not be otherwise than painful to me, unaccustomed as I was to his absence; but having always made it a principle to sacrifice every self-gratification to the real or apparent interest of my children, I offered not the slightest obstacle to his departure for the army, which I conceived to be as advantageous to him in the profession he had chosen, as it had now become necessary. I heard from him often, and I heard from several others, that he received from Prince Potemkin the most flattering marks of favour and esteem, such, indeed, as excited the astonishment of all who were acquainted with the thoughtless character of Potemkin, the spoiled child of fortune.

For my own part, I was now tolerably at ease. Not but what I often experienced both fatigue and annoyance in many of the details of my public office, especially in my attempts at producing a reform, where such interference was necessary, and in checking a wasteful expenditure, which had of late been suffered.

During the following summer, the Grand Duke Paul and the Grand Duchess returned from abroad. They had frequent parties at Gatchina, their summer residence, and the persons invited were entertained for several days together, with great politeness, and even kindness, on the part of their imperial highnesses; so much so, indeed, that I have been assured by many that they were made to feel themselves perfectly at their ease. I seldom went thither

myself, and the excuse I urged in answer to invitations was the full occupation I had in endeavours to acquit myself of a public duty far above my powers, as well as the distance between Gatchina and the Strelina Palace, which I then inhabited by the empress's desire.

Pressed, at length, by the grand duke to make one in these parties, I begged he might be informed that, although no one could better appreciate than myself the pleasures of an easy life at Gatchina, and the advantages to be enjoyed in his and the grand duchess's society, yet, in addition to the little leisure I could command, I was compelled from another cause to impose a restraint on my wishes. Everything, I observed, which passed at Gatchina was well known to be always reported at Czarskoselo, and in return, intelligence of whatever was doing at the latter court seldom failed to be communicated to the former. In depriving myself, therefore, of the pleasure of paying my court at Gatchina, I took away from her majesty a right, which she might otherwise assume, of asking questions which I might not wish to answer, and from his imperial highness, as I trusted, every occasion of suspecting me to be a talebearer between the mother and her son—an imputation I held in so much abhorrence that in order to avoid it I was compelled to make a sacrifice which, after a moment's reflection, his highness, I was persuaded, would be the first to approve.

On this principle I uniformly regulated my conduct towards the parties in question for ten succeeding years, never frequenting his imperial highness's parties except on state occasions, when they were attended by all the court. The empress knowing this, never, therefore, attempted to inform herself through me of matters relative to her son; and if (as it sometimes happened) her majesty spoke to me with disapprobation of some points in his conduct, I always turned the conversation by a remark that a third person should never be made a party to such subjects, especially in cases where it was only necessary to make her wishes known in order to ensure obedience.

This honest and straightforward dealing towards the grand duke was of very little avail, as will be afterwards seen, in securing me from the persecuting vagaries of Paul the First, which I was exposed to, and experienced in common with those whom he imagined had treasonably offended him.

About the time of which I have just been speaking, Count Andrew Shouvaloff returned from Paris, and soon succeeded in fixing on the favourite Lanskoy a very unfavourable impression of me and my son. One day whilst in conversation, the empress remarking on the facility with which copies of the best works of art could be procured in Italy, I expressed my regret that I had never been able to obtain in Petersburg a bust of her majesty, which I was extremely desirous of possessing. The empress

immediately desired that one should be brought to her which had been executed by the celebrated Russian artist, M. Shoubin, and begged I would accept it.

Lanskoy, who was present, on seeing it, exclaimed aloud, "Why, this bust is mine; it belongs to me!"

"You are mistaken," said her majesty, "and I beg Princess Daschkaw will take it."

This little altercation did not, however, pass without Lanskoy's darting a glance of furious resentment on me, which I returned with one of the most sovereign contempt on him; and from that moment his animosity was continually exhibited, in petty attempts to wrangle and dispute with me, which the empress herself remarked, and often thought it proper to check.

In the course of my official business, I soon experienced great cause of disgust from the conduct of the procureur-general, Prince Viazemsky, who would at some times pay no attention to the recommendations I made to the senate for the promotion of such members of the academy as I thought deserving, and would at others wholly neglect to furnish those documents for which I made requisition, respecting the limits of the several governments of the empire, of which I was desirous of publishing better maps. At length he had the assurance to ask my treasurer, why, when he brought to him monthly the account of the government fund, he did not bring that of the economic fund also. On

this I instantly wrote to her majesty to request my dismissal, intimating that Prince Viazemsky wished to establish a responsibility which had never been imposed on a director since the first establishment of the academy, not even during the directorship of my predecessor, a person more than suspected of peculation. At the same time I put her majesty in mind, that it was at the instance of my own extreme solicitude alone, that I had obtained permission to make a monthly report of the economic fund, which I had done regularly to her majesty in person, and had often received the gratifying testimony of her satisfaction at its flourishing state; and such being the case, I begged her majesty to believe that I would never suffer the procureur-general to encroach on privileges of the director which were essential to the prosperity of the academy, and still less would I endure the smallest doubt to be entertained of my own integrity.

Prince Viazemsky received in consequence a reprimand from the empress, and I was desired to think no more of his folly. This minister, it must be allowed, was a man of business and application, and had method and order in his office, but he was uninformed, and extremely vindictive. He long owed me a grudge for taking into employ some persons whom he had persecuted, and whom, by removing them from their situations,he had deprived of their daily bread. Another thing which contributed not a little to draw his animosity on me was

this. A new journal had been published by the academy, for which her majesty occasionally furnished some sheets, as well as myself; and amongst others of its members concerned in the work was the advocate Kazadoffleff, who made frequent contributions both in prose and verse. In this journal whatever article bore any appearance of satire Prince Viazemsky was sure to apply either to himself or to his wife, especially when he found that M. Derjawin was another person engaged in it, who having lost a place under government through his interference, was therefore suspected of taking all the revenge which, as a poet, whose verses were universally read and admired, he had in his power.

I still continued to endure, in several unpleasant particulars, the ill effects of Prince Viazemsky's resentment, whose spleen, once excited, never ceased to vent itself in the most vexatious opposition to all my designs for the public advantage, even whilst I was employed in a work of such obvious utility as the preparation of new and accurate maps of the provinces, the limits of which had never been laid down on paper since the late division of the empire. This new arrangement of so vast an empire into governments, the first systematic step towards the introduction of order and civilization throughout the interior, was a labour truly worthy of the great Catherine. The roads were in consequence rendered safe and commodious. Inland commerce derived new activity, and an increase

of individual wealth was soon manifest in the improvement of the towns. In the residences of the different governments, cathedrals and handsome palaces for the governors were constructed at the public expense. But above all, the empress, (who could not brook the aptness of an old Russian proverb, which runs thus: "*We cannot go to God to seek for justice, his dwelling is too high; nor to the Czar, his dwelling is too distant,*") established courts of judicature and a civil police in the several districts, and thus ensured public confidence and security; blessings quite incompatible with the necessity which had heretofore existed of travelling two or three thousand versts in quest of justice.

Prince Viazemsky, instead of furnishing any documents himself towards facilitating this work of maps, which might have been expected from the office he held, made it a rule to retain or delay those communications which at my request the governors of provinces had sent to the academy; but as I could not bear to be continually tormenting the empress with my complaints, I fortified myself on these occasions with all the patience I could summon to my aid.

In the month of July my son returned from the army as bearer of the despatches announcing the final settlement of the Crimea as a Russian province. My surprise and joy at thus seeing him so much sooner than I had reason to expect were inexpres-

sible. He remained but a few days at Petersburg, and then returned to the army with the rank of colonel. I was the more pleased at this act of favour on the part of the empress, as his new rank, in removing him from the guards, withdrew him also from the seductions of the metropolis, and gave him an opportunity of employing his activity and talents at the head of his regiment.

One day, whilst I was walking with the empress in the gardens of Czarskoselo, our conversation turned on the beauty and richness of the Russian language, which led me to express a sort of surprise that her majesty, who could well appreciate its value, and was herself an author, had never thought of establishing a Russian academy.

I observed that nothing was wanting but rules, and a good dictionary, to render our language wholly independent of those foreign terms and phrases, so very inferior to our own in expression and energy, which had been so absurdly introduced into it.

"I really know not," replied her majesty, "how it happens that such an idea has not been already carried into effect; the usefulness of an establishment for the improvement of our own language has often occupied my thoughts, and I have even given directions about it."

"That is very surprising, madam," said I, "for surely nothing can well be easier than the execution

of such a project. There is a great variety of models to be found, and you have only to make choice of the best."

"Do you, princess, I beg," returned her majesty, "give me a sketch of one."

"It would be better, madam," replied I, "were you to order one of your secretaries to present you with a plan of the French academy, the academy at Berlin, and a few others, with remarks on such particulars as might be better adapted to the genius and habits of your own people."

"I entreat of you, I must beg to repeat it," said the empress, "that you will take upon yourself this trouble, for then I can confidently look forward, through your zeal and activity, to the accomplishment of an object which, with shame I confess it, has been too long delayed."

"The trouble, madam," said I, "will be very trifling, and I will obey you as expeditiously as possible; but I have not the books I wish to refer to at hand, and I must be allowed the liberty of again assuring your majesty that any of the secretaries in your antechamber would execute the commission better than myself."

Her majesty, however, continuing to express herself of a different opinion, I found it useless to offer objections.

When I returned home in the evening, I set myself, therefore, to consider how I might best execute her orders, and before I went to bed I drew

up a sort of plan, which I thought might furnish some ideas for the formation of the establishment in view, and sent it off to the empress, more, indeed, for the purpose of complying with her wishes than from any serious thoughts of furnishing a design worthy of her choice and adoption. My astonishment may therefore be imagined, when I received back again, from the hands of her majesty, this imperfect outline of a scheme hastily conceived and informally drawn up, with all the ceremonials of an official instrument, confirmed by the sanction of her imperial signature, and accompanied with an ukase, which conferred on me the presidentship of the embryo academy. A copy of this ukase I at the same time learned had been transmitted to the senate.

Though this had the air of the empress's being in earnest, and resolute in her intentions with regard to me, I nevertheless went to Czarskoselo two days afterwards, still hoping to prevail on her majesty to make choice of some other president. Finding my efforts unavailing, I told her majesty that as Director of the Academy of Arts and Sciences I had already at my disposal sufficient funds for the maintenance of the new establishment, and that she need be at no other expense, at present, than the purchase of a house for it. These funds, I observed, in explanation, would arise out of the five thousand roubles which she gave annually, from her private purse, for translations of the classics.

The empress evinced her surprise and satisfaction, but expressed her hopes that the translations should still be continued.

" Most assuredly, madam," said I, " the translations shall be carried on, and I trust more extensively than hitherto, by the students of the academy of sciences, subject to the revision and correction of the professors; and thus the 5000 roubles, of which the directors have never rendered any account, and which, to judge from the very few translations that have appeared, they seem to have put into their own pockets, may now be turned to a very useful purpose. I will have the honour, madam," added I, " of presenting you soon with an estimate of all the necessary expenses of the proposed establishments; and considering the sum I have stated as the extent of its means, we shall then see if anything remains for the less absolute requisites, such as medals and casts,—a few of which may be deemed, indeed, almost indispensable, in order to reward and distinguish the most deserving of its students."

In the estimate, which I accordingly made, I fixed the salary of two secretaries at nine hundred roubles, and of two translators at four hundred and fifty roubles each. It was necessary, also, to have a treasurer, and four persons, invalid soldiers, to heat the stoves and to take care of the house. These appointments together I estimated at 3300 roubles, which left seventeen hundred for fuel,

paper, and the occasional purchase of books, but no surplus whatever for casts and medals.

Her majesty, who had been accustomed to a very different scale of expenditure, was, I think, more surprised than pleased at this estimate; but signified her desire to add whatever was wanted for the purposes not provided for in it, and this I fixed at 1250 roubles. The salary of the president, and contingent perquisites of office, were not usually forgotten in estimates of this nature, but in the present I had not assigned myself a single rouble; and thus was a most useful establishment, answering every object of its institution, founded and supported at no greater expense to her majesty than the price of a few honorary badges.

To sum up all that need be said on the subject of the Russian Academy, I may be allowed to state the following particulars,—viz., in the first place, that with three years' arrears of her majesty's bounty, originally granted for the translation of the classics, which had not been paid to M. Domashneff—that is to say, with fifteen thousand roubles, in addition to what sums I could spare from the economic fund—I built two houses in the court of the house given by the empress for the academy, which added a rent of 1950 roubles to its revenue; I furnished the house of the academy, and by degrees purchased a very considerable library, having, in the meantime, lent my own for its use; I left 49,000 roubles as a fund, placed in the Foundling Hospital; I

began, finished, and published a dictionary; and all this I had accomplished at the end of eleven years. I say nothing of the new building for the academy, the elevation of which has been so much admired, executed, indeed, under my directions, but at the expense of the crown, and therefore not to be enumerated among those labours which were more especially my own. Besides, had it been, strictly speaking, a work of mine, I could never have considered it as one of my *labours;* for with so decided a taste, or rather passion, as I had for architecture, such a work would have formed one of my highest gratifications.

I ought to observe, before I dismiss this subject, that many things occurred at court relative to the concerns of my office, both to vex and disgust me. The enlightened part of the public, indeed, rendered me more than justice in the tribute of praise they bestowed on my zeal and public spiritedness, to which they were pleased to refer all the merit of the institution of a Russian Academy, as well as the astonishing rapidity with which the first dictionary of our native language was completed.

This latter work was a subject of very clamorous criticism, particularly as to the method of its verbal arrangement, which was not according to an alphabetical, but an etymological order. This was objected to, as rendering the dictionary confused, and ill adapted for popular use; an objection very loudly echoed by the courtiers as soon as it was

known to have been made by the empress, who asked me more than once why we had adopted so inconvenient an arrangement. It was, I informed her majesty, no unusual one in the first dictionary of any language, on account of the greater facility it afforded in shewing and even discovering the roots of words; but that the Academy would publish, in about three years, a second edition, arranged alphabetically, and much more perfect in every respect.

I know not how it was that the empress, whose perception could embrace every object, even those the most profound, appeared not to comprehend me, but this I know, that I experienced in consequence much annoyance, and notwithstanding my repugnance to declare the opinion which her majesty had pronounced against our dictionary, at a sitting of the Academy, I determined to bring forward the question again at our first meeting, without entering into some other matters connected with it, for which I had been often made accountable.

All the members, as I expected, gave their judgment that it was impossible to arrange otherwise the first dictionary of our language, but that the second would be more complete, and disposed in alphabetical order.

I repeated to the empress, the next time I saw her, the unanimous opinion of the academicians, and the reason they gave for it. Her majesty, however, continued to retain her own, and was, in

fact, at that time much interested in a work dignified by the name of a dictionary, of which M. Pallas was the compiler. It was a sort of vocabulary, in nearly a hundred languages, some of which presented the reader with about a score of words only, such as *earth*, *air*, *water*, *father*, *mother*, &c. Its learned author, celebrated for the publication of his travels in Russia, and for his attainments in natural history, had dared to run up the expense of printing this work, called a dictionary, to flatter a little prejudice of her majesty, to a sum exceeding 20,000 roubles, not to mention the very considerable cost it brought on the cabinet in dispatching couriers into Siberia, Kamtchatka, &c., to pick up a few words in different languages, meagre, and of little utility.

Paltry and imperfect as was this singular performance, it was extolled as an admirable dictionary, and was to me at that time an occasion of much disgust and some vexation.

CHAPTER XXI.

Literary labours of the princess—Prince Daschkaw returns home —Arrangement of his property—The princess accompanies the empress into Finland—The Swedish minister—The imperial cortège—Dinner with the King of Sweden—Royal interviews—The king visits the princess incognito—First visit declined—Character of the king—Count Armfeldt—Return to Czarskoselo—Attack on the princess by the favourite Lanskoy — Her reply — Mrs. Hamilton visits the princess—Journey to Troitskoe—A village fête—Visit to Krouglo—Return to Petersburg—Sitting of the Academy—Speech of the princess—Death of the elder M. Scherbinin—Its consequences—Painful recollections—Dangerous accident — Departure of Mrs. Hamilton — Return of Prince Daschkaw—Unpleasing rumours.

To afford a little amusement to my thoughts, I went to my country house, which I was then building in stone. I had at this time altogether renounced society and visits in town. The two academies occupied so much of my time that I had none to spare. My share of the labour in compiling our work was to make a collection of all the words commencing with three letters of the alphabet; and every Saturday we had a general meeting to search the roots of those words which had been

collected by the several members. Thus, with a visit every week to Czarskoselo, my time was fully employed.

During this winter, 1783, my son obtained leave of absence for two months, to come and visit me, at which period I made over to him, by an act confirmed by her majesty, all the property of his father, with the reservation only of that portion which was destined to my use; and thus I had the satisfaction of relieving myself from the care of administering his affairs. He was now in possession of more than had been left by his father for all of us—for himself, his sister, and me—without one rouble of debt; so that I could truly answer to others, and, what was of far more consequence, I could answer to my own conscience, that I had not badly administered the trust which had been wholly abandoned to me by the rest of the guardians.

In the course of the summer, her majesty went into Finland, and in engaging me to accompany her she employed as many expressions of favour and kindness as if I had to make some great sacrifice in yielding to her wishes. On the contrary, I had pleasure in the thoughts of this excursion. I wished to see Finland, and I hoped to dissipate a little the melancholy which had long oppressed me. I had also a curiosity to know the King of Sweden, who was expected to visit Fredericksham, and to make a comparison between him and the Duke of Sudermania, with whom I was well acquainted. To

witness an interview between two enlightened sovereigns, relatives and neighbours, could not be otherwise to me than a matter of much interest.

All these considerations led me to accept the empress's invitation as a most agreeable proposal.

On the day fixed for our departure I had a visit from the chargé d'affaires of his Swedish majesty, the minister, M. de Nohken, being then absent from Petersburg on his way to meet the king. He came to announce his sovereign's intention of presenting me with the decoration of the grand cross of the order of Merit, and to inform me of the satisfaction which his majesty had expressed that I, whose acquaintance he had long wished to make, was about to accompany her imperial majesty to Fredericksham.

" This latter sentiment, sir," I replied, " is highly flattering, but as to the decoration, I conjure you to dissuade his majesty from any such intention;—in the first place, because I am a mere *ninette à la cour*, embarrassed enough to arrange decently on my shoulders the decoration which I already bear; and secondly, as this distinction has never yet been conferred on any female, such a mark of favour could not fail to create many enemies, in awakening envy, without gratifying me, the deeply obliged, but unworthy object of it."

I concluded by begging him to assure his Swedish majesty that no one could more sensibly appreciate his goodness than myself, and that it was the high

esteem which I entertained for his character and enlightened understanding which encouraged me in the present instance to decline the great honour which he had proposed.

We set off that evening from the palace, embarking on board a vessel which was to convey us to the other side of the river, called the Wibourg side, where the imperial travelling equipages were in readiness for our journey.

We saw the ancient capital of Finland, Wibourg, in the different streets of which we were all separately lodged. A very good house, and what is better, a very clean one, was allotted as my quarter. The next day, the judges, all the people in office, the nobility, and the military, were presented to her majesty, who received them with her peculiar grace and kindness — in a manner, indeed, which won every heart.

I have so little taste for giving details of my journeys, that I have failed to say, in its right place, that we slept on our way at one of the imperial country residences, where there was a palace which lodged us all commodiously. I ought also to have mentioned the names of those persons who accompanied the empress and formed her suite. Of women there was only myself. Of men there were, the favourite, M. Lanskoy, Count Ivan Tchernicheff, Count Strogonoff, and M. de Schertkoff; six altogether in the carriage of her majesty. Besides these, M. de Narischkin, grand equerry; M. de Bezborodka, first

secretary; M. de Strakaloff, who had the direction of the cabinet; and two chamberlains, were sent on before to the Swedish frontier, in order to pay their respects to his majesty, and to announce the empress' approach.

The next day, at night, we reached Fredericksham, where we were less well lodged than hitherto; and the day following, the king arrived. He was immediately conducted to her majesty, whilst his suite, remaining in the anteroom, were presented to me. Here we made acquaintance, and when the two sovereigns entered, the empress presented me to the king.

The dinner went off pleasantly, and afterwards their majesties had a private conference. This was the daily habit as long as we remained at Fredericksham. I have no opinion, it must be confessed, of any great sincerity subsisting in the intercourse of crowned heads thus brought together. Notwithstanding all the resources which good sense, intelligence, and the most polished courtesy can afford, time will at length hang heavily on hand. Politics cannot fail to render such a daily commerce both embarrassing and oppressive.

The King of Sweden, under the name of Count de Haga, came on the third day to my door. I gave directions to say that I was not at home; and having entered the empress' apartment before the evening circle was formed, I told her that I had refused his visit.

Her majesty was not quite pleased at this; but I endeavoured to excuse myself on the plea that the king had become so *Frenchified* by his journey to Paris that he could have no sort of satisfaction in a being so simple and so sincere as myself. The empress, however, begged me to receive his visit the day following, and to make it as long as possible.

Conceiving that her majesty desired more time to herself, and less to be at the service of her illustrious friend, I readily obeyed, and received the Count de Haga when he called. Our conversation was not without interest. His majesty had much good sense, information, and considerable eloquence; but he had also the prejudices of a king, and, what is worse, of a travelled king,—that is to say, he had adopted false ideas on all that he had seen in foreign countries. Little, we know, is exhibited to royal travellers, except the favourable side of every object, and everything is so got up for their inspection as to present a fair, and consequently, in most cases, a delusive exterior. Another evil attendant on the journeys of sovereign princes and their heirs is, that in order to gain them over, no species of incense and adulation is ever spared in the countries which they visit. In returning to their homes, nothing short of adoration, therefore, is acceptable from their own subjects.

For these reasons I should never recommend such illustrious personages to travel into foreign countries. Far better would it be to confine their journeys to

the provinces of their own states, and to move without that exterior parade which sometimes becomes their rank, but on such occasions brings only a needless expense on their subjects, when to acquaint themselves with their position and peculiar interests should be their simple object.

In the course of our conversation I could not but perceive how much his Swedish majesty had been gulled by the copious doses of flattery he had swallowed in France, which led him to judge of that country and its inhabitants with a most unmeasured partiality. Indeed, I took the liberty not always to be of his opinion, and I supported my own on the observations I had made during two several residences in France, when I visited both its interior and its frontier provinces. I even ventured to observe, that on these occasions no one would ever think it worth while to deceive so insignificant a person as myself, in comparison with his majesty, and that therefore I was left at liberty to view things as they were, and to make my own conclusions.

Count Armfeldt, celebrated for the misfortunes and the persecutions which he suffered after this king's death, through the Duke of Sudermania, was present at this interview, and now and then professed his assent to my observations. I was very glad when the visit was over, and I repaired to the empress' apartment, whither the king had preceded me.

The next day his majesty took his departure,

after making presents to those who composed the suite of the empress. To me, as a mark of friendship, he presented in person a ring with his portrait set in large diamonds. Both sovereigns set off at the same time from Fredericksham; and the empress taking the direct route to Czarskoselo, we arrived there the evening before the anniversary of her majesty's accession. I had nothing more pressing to do than to unset the brilliants from the King of Sweden's portrait, and to replace them with small pearls, in order that I might give the diamonds to my niece, Mlle. de Paliansky, who was arrived with the rest of the maids of honour to be present at the fête.

Soon after our return to Czarskoselo I had to sustain a most ridiculous attack from the favourite, Lanskoy, which I must not forget to mention. Prince Bariatinsky, as grand master of the court, was ordered to send daily to the academy, for insertion in the Gazette, a detail of our progress, and of all which was done in the places where we passed and where we stopped, &c. When the prince spoke to me on this subject, I reminded him of an order I had given long before, that whatever was presented at the academy with his signature should be published without delay; and that nothing should be printed concerning the movements of the court which was not signed either by him or the Marshal Orloff; in which communications I had strictly for-

bidden any change to be permitted, even in the spelling of a single word.

Lanskoy complained that in the Gazette accounts of the late journey, of the halts and the dinners of her majesty, no mention was made of any person after the empress but myself.

" I must refer you, then," said I, " to Prince Bariatinsky for an explanation of this. It was not I who composed them; but from him you will learn that, ever since I presided over the academy, the Gazette has never contained a single article touching the court which was not sent by him or by Orloff, with their respective signatures."

" Yet," he replied, " it is you alone, madam, who are ever mentioned after the empress."

" Have I not already told you," said I, " that it is to Prince Bariatinsky you ought to apply for satisfaction on this point. For my own part, I do not in the least occupy myself with these articles, nor have I seen one of them."

The favourite still persisted to repeat the same words, till at length, annoyed with his absurdity, " It is fit you should understand, sir," I was tempted to reply, " that great as is the honour of dining with my sovereign, which I well know how to appreciate, it is not an honour new or surprising to me; for it is one which I have enjoyed even from the cradle. The late Empress Elizabeth was my godmother, and came more than once a-week to our house.

Often, indeed, have I dined upon her knees, and when I was able to support myself on a chair I dined at table with her. Should I, then, be the person to publish in a Gazette an honour to which I have always been accustomed, and to which my birth has entitled me?"

I was in hopes this would have finished our conversation; but not so: he returned to the charge; and finding the saloon in which we were was beginning to fill with people,—"Sir," said I, interrupting him, loud enough to be heard by all present, "a person whose actions have no end in view but that which is honourable, and whose service is directed solely to the public good, may not always enjoy the most brilliant credit and fortune, but ought to be exempt from impertinences, and in pursuing a tranquil and upright course, may chance to survive those dazzling meteors of a day which are so often seen to burst into nothingness."

The empress then appeared, and delivered me by her presence from this stupid attack of the favourite.

The words I have recorded were a sort of prediction, for in less than a year after Lanskoy died.

The summer following, Mrs. Hamilton came over from Ireland to see me; and it would be difficult to express the joy I experienced in the visit of this respectable and beloved friend. She was presented

to her majesty by special favour, at Czarskoselo, where foreigners are not commonly received.

I requested leave of absence for three months from Petersburg, in order to accompany my friend to Moscow. After having shewn her the various objects of interest and curiosity which this ancient capital contains, I conducted her to my favourite estate—to that Troitskoe where I should wish to live and die,—and truly delighted I was to perceive that my friend was pleased with the beauties of this enchanting spot, and that she, though an Englishwoman, accustomed to the fine parks and gardens of her own country, could admire and approve of mine, which I had not only myself entirely formed, but of which every tree and shrub was of my own selection, and planted under my own eyes.

I took occasion to give my friend a village fête, which both pleased and affected her. A village had been newly built on my estate, a few versts from Troitskoe, and here I assembled all the peasants who were about to occupy it, dressed in their holiday suits, embroidered, as is the custom with us, by the females. The weather was delicious, and I encouraged them to dance on the grass, singing in accompaniment, according to our country fashion.

Mrs. Hamilton, to whom this sort of fête was quite new, was no less charmed with the nationality of the scene and beauty of the dresses than with the

picturesque effect of the groupes which sung and danced before her.

To give it all the effect we could, refreshments, consisting of Russian dishes and drinks, were not forgotten; and the whole formed a picture so striking and so interesting that she was infinitely more pleased with our little rural entertainment than she could have been with the most magnificent court festivity.

At the moment when these good people were going to drink my health, I presented to them my friend, as the person who ought to receive their homage; and telling them that the new village which they were about to occupy was henceforth to bear her name of *Hamilton*, I wished them every sort of prosperity in a spot consecrated by a name so dear to me. I then presented to them the offering of *bread and salt*, according to our ancient usage, which is religiously observed throughout Russia, signifying a wish that these two necessaries of life might never be wanting in their new dwellings; and sent them away so joyous and so grateful that the memory of this day is still preserved among the inhabitants of my little colony of Hamilton. My friend was warmly interested in its prosperity; she made several visits to these good peasants, and frequently inquired after their welfare, even to the last years of her life.

From Troitskoe we went to Krouglo, my estate in

White Russia, near Mohiloff, which the empress had given me; and thus my friend had the opportunity of seeing a considerable part of the governments of Moscow, Kalouga, Smolensko, and Mohiloff.

We did not return to Petersburg until the end of autumn, about which time it was the custom at the Academy of Sciences to read those works which had been sent the preceding year by different *savans*, as candidates for the academical prizes, which, according to the published program, were not to be adjudged till the year after.

I had no taste whatever for figuring at our scientific conferences, and still less for those where the sitting was public; I was nevertheless compelled, by the pressing solicitations of Mrs. Hamilton, who insisted on seeing me act, *ex cathedrâ*, in the quality of director, to overcome my repugnance. As the day fixed for adjudging the prizes had been announced in the gazettes, and that the sitting would be public, as usual, a great concourse of people, and among these the foreign ministers, and even their wives, presented themselves as spectators and auditors. I had to deliver a speech, which I made as laconic as possible, but though it was not of more than five or six minutes' length, I was obliged to have recourse to a glass of iced water prepared for me, to overcome the fever of *mauvaise honte* with which I am apt to be afflicted on such emergencies.

The conclusion of the sitting was, as may be conceived, a delightful moment of relief to me, and I have never since presided on a similar occasion.

About this time we heard of the death of M. de Scherbinin's father. A false friend of my daughter's, with no other view, I firmly believe, than the hope of obtaining from her presents of money and jewels the more easily if removed from my influence, counselled her to seek a reunion with her husband, from whom she had been several years separated. When I was informed that a letter to this effect had been written to M. Scherbinin, I did not attempt to oppose maternal authority to such a wish on her part, but I did not hesitate to urge all the motives against it which friendship and tenderness could dictate, accompanied with many powerful reasons, which it is unnecessary to detail. Tears, unavailing entreaties, and agonizing sorrow, almost amounting to despair, brought on me a fit of illness. I foresaw, in truth, all that has since happened; besides, I was well acquainted with my daughter's prodigality; it was impossible, therefore, not to anticipate the fearful embarrassments into which that alone would soon lead her. She promised, it is true, not to remain at Petersburg, but to live either with the relations of her husband or on her estate.

I must be spared the recital of some events which I cannot call to mind without the most painful emotions. It will be sufficient to say that a serious illness ensued, which made my sister and Mrs.

Hamilton tremble for my life. Such, indeed, was the shock which my nervous system had undergone, that when I was capable of taking the air, and of driving to and from my country house, I found every recollection of the objects I passed had vanished from my memory; my mind was alive only to the sensations of grief, and to circumstances which my imagination too readily and too truly foreboded in the future.

One day that my sister and my friend forced me out on one of these excursions, we took the road of Annenhof, and alighted in a wood bordering on my estate. It happened that on that side I had not as yet constructed any buildings. Two simple posts, with a beam above, served as a sort of entrance gate into my own grounds. The carriage went on a little before us, and as I was passing the gate, a few steps behind Mrs. Hamilton and my sister, the heavy cross beam gave way and fell upon my head.

A cry from them brought my servants to the spot, who had been seeking mushrooms in the wood. I sat on the ground, and entreating my two companions to be tranquil, I took off my nightcap and hat, which I believe had been the means of saving me, and requested they would examine whether there was any appearance of fracture, as I felt pain on that part where the beam had struck. Though there was no external mark, my friend proposed that we should immediately get into the

carriage, and return to town as soon as possible, to consult Dr. Rogerson. I, however, was of opinion that it would be better to walk about a little, in order to procure a more general circulation, by impelling the blood to the legs. When we reached town the doctor was sent for, who inquired, with rather an alarmed air, if I had felt any symptoms of sickness. I answered with a smile, that although I had felt them, I was persuaded he would have no occasion to trouble himself about me, for there was a genius who watched over me, and made me live in spite of myself.

In truth, this accident had no serious consequence. It was not by physical shocks or pains that I was likely to be destroyed; would to God that I was equally well armed against moral sufferings!

My impaired health at length began, by little and little, to recover; but the departure of Mrs. Hamilton in the summer following, 1785, plunged me again into a melancholy which I could only overcome through constant activity, either by occupying myself with the affairs of the two academies, or by inspecting the works and buildings which were then in progress at my country place. I even laboured along with the masons, working at the walls of the house with my own hands.

The ensuing winter, Prince Daschkaw came for a short time to Petersburg, as well as Prince Potemkin. The absurd rumours that my son would be

the favourite began to be renewed; and one day M. de Samoiloff, nephew of Prince Potemkin, called at my house to inquire whether Prince Daschkaw was at home. Finding that my son was out, this gentleman came up to my apartment, and after a preamble which seemed to refer to this subject, informed me that Prince Potemkin wished to see my son at his house as soon as possible after dinner.

"All that you are doing me the honour to say," I replied, "could never be meant for my ears. Perhaps it might be your commission to speak with Prince Daschkaw; as for myself, whilst I love the empress, and dare not oppose her will, I have too much self-respect and self-esteem to take part in any affair of such a nature; and if what you are pleased to intimate should ever occur, the only use I shall make of my son's influence will be to obtain leave of absence for some years, and a passport to visit foreign countries."

The term of his leave of absence being expired, my son set off to join his regiment, and my distress at this separation was, I must confess, greatly diminished, as I saw in his departure an end to all these conjectures.

CHAPTER XXII.

Improved condition of the princess's dependents—War with Sweden—Conduct of the empress—Anecdote of the Duke of Sudermania—Interview with the empress—M. Rebender—Clandestine marriage of Prince Daschkaw—The princess's feelings thereon—Unworthy conduct of the prince—Count Romantzoff—Literary pursuits of the princess—Despondency.

I SUFFERED much that winter from domestic uneasiness, which had its usual effect in injuring my health. In the spring I obtained permission to leave town for two months, which time I employed in visiting Troitskoe, and returning by my estate at Krouglo, where, though I stayed only a week, I had the satisfaction of observing its much improved condition. My peasants I found less miserable and less idle, and in possession of double the number of horses and other cattle which they had when they first became my property, and esteeming themselves much happier than they were formerly, either as living under the Polish government, or belonging to the crown of Russia.

The care of the two academies, which returned on me after this journey, served to divert my thoughts from other subjects, which would have wholly engrossed them, and were making a deep and painful impression on my mind.

About this time the war broke out with Sweden, the conduct of which manifested in a striking point of view some of those great qualities of soul and character which the historians of her reign have so justly attributed to Catherine.

During this war, a circumstance relative to myself occurred, which I will mention. I have already said, that whilst on my first journey abroad, I made acquaintance with the Duke of Sudermania, brother to the King of Sweden. This prince, who commanded the Swedish fleet, sent, soon after the commencement of hostilities, a flag of truce to Cronstadt, with a letter for our admiral (Gregg), begging him to forward, and to have safely delivered into my hands, a little case with my address, which had been found in one of the vessels he had captured, and along with it a letter written to me by himself. The admiral, conceiving himself peculiarly obliged, both as a foreigner and as one of my intimate friends, to act with the utmost discretion on such an occasion, immediately sent what he had thus received to the council of state at Petersburg. The empress, who at that time almost always presided at the council table in person, ordered the case and letter to be

sent, without any examination, according to its address. I was then at my country house, and was not a little surprised on hearing that a messenger from the council of state wished to see me. The case and letter were introduced, the former of which contained a large packet from Dr. Franklin, and the latter a very complimentary communication* on the part of the Duke of Sudermania, informing me of the accident of war which had placed the box in his hands; and as he had lost no portion of that esteem for me with which I had inspired him on our first acquaintance at Aix and Spa, and not wishing that a war, in his opinion so unnatural between sovereigns nearly allied in blood, should extinguish private friendship, he had hastened to forward the accompanying package to its rightful owner.

I dismissed the messenger, telling him that I would immediately present myself at the palace, and acquaint her majesty with the nature of these dispatches. Accordingly, I drove to town, or rather, straight to court; and on entering the empress's dressing-room I told the valet-de-chambre in waiting that if her majesty was not then engaged, I should be happy in having permission to speak to her, and to shew her some papers which I had that morning received. The empress desired I might

* See letter in Supplement.

be shewn into her bedchamber, where I found her writing at a little table. Having delivered into her hands the letter of the Duke of Sudermania—"These others, madam," said I, "are from Dr. Franklin, and from the secretary of the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, of which I have been admitted a most unworthy member."

When the empress had read the duke's letter, I asked what her commands were on the subject. "Let me beg of you," said she, "not to answer it at all, but to let this correspondence drop."

"It is a correspondence," said I, "which has not been much cultivated, for this is the only letter I have received from him these twelve years; and though not to answer it will be at the expense of my good breeding, this is a very small sacrifice in comparison with what I would willingly make every day of my life at your majesty's suggestion. But let me call to your recollection a very faithful portrait which I once drew of this prince, and perhaps you will perceive that it is not altogether *pour mes beaux yeux* (as the phrase is) that he has done me this honour, but to catch at an opportunity of any sort which might open to him a mode of negotiating his own interests separately from those of the king his brother."

Her majesty would not hear of a continuation of this correspondence; but it was, some months after-

wards, sufficiently obvious that I had done his highness no sort of injustice in the judgment I had formed of his character and intentions.

On leaving her majesty's apartment, she invited, or rather pressed, me to spend the evening, and to see the play which they were going to perform at the Hermitage.

It was then too early an hour in the afternoon for the arrival of any of the company; but as I loitered through the gentlemen's saloon I met with M. Rebender, equerry to the empress—an honest and friendly man, in the full extent of the phrase. He came up to me to pay his compliments, and observed that he was no stranger to the subject which had led to my present visit.

"That is very probable," said I; "but I should nevertheless be glad to know from your own lips how you came to have heard of it."

"It was," replied he, "by a letter from Kioff, which informed me of the circumstance, and that the ceremony of your son's marriage was performed during a halt of his regiment on their march from that place."

My feelings at this piece of news may perhaps be conceived. I thought I should have sunk into the earth; but I could just summon strength enough to ask the name of her whom my son had married. It was Alteroff, he informed me,—when, observing my change of countenance, my poor friend, who had a great regard for me, fancied I was suddenly taken

ill, little conscious how his words could have affected me.

"For Heaven's sake," I exclaimed, "a glass of water."

He ran to get it for me, and in a few moments I recovered myself sufficiently to tell him what it was that had really brought me that day to the palace, and that the account which had just escaped him was the first I had received of a marriage reprehensible enough, I had reason to fear, from the secrecy which had attended it.

M. Rebender was shocked beyond measure at finding himself the bearer of such unwelcome news; but I begged of him to let the subject drop, and to assist me in regaining sufficient composure to pass the evening as her majesty had required. My efforts, however, to recover myself were painful and unavailing.

The agitation under which I laboured was too manifest to escape the notice of the surrounding courtiers, who would certainly have set me down as a state criminal detected in the very act of treason, had not her majesty often directed to me her conversation, and remarking my pensive air and utter abstraction from the business of the stage, sought to divert me by her own gaiety, and a thousand little sallies of playful humour, which she could more easily conceive, and use with more grace and effect, than any person living.

I avoided the supper party with the empress,

which usually followed these entertainments, and hastened home. A wound was thus inflicted on my maternal feelings of the most painful and incurable nature. For several days I could do nothing but give way to tears. A nervous fever ensued. I could not but compare my husband's conduct to his mother at the prospect of his marriage with that of my son, whilst I felt that the sacrifices of every kind which I had made for my children, and the constancy with which I had devoted myself to my son's education, merited from him at least as much confidence and consideration towards me as had been exhibited by his father on a like occasion towards a parent not more entitled to such respect.

Two months passed away, when I received a letter from my son, who, though his ill-judged marriage had been long known to, and canvassed in, all the gossiping parties of Petersburg, wrote to ask my consent to it. I had already learned sufficient particulars of the young woman to whom he had united himself, and of her family, to be more and more exasperated at the match; and to find myself now treated with derision, in being asked to give my consent to what had already taken place without it, was more than I could bear, and enough to deprive me of my senses.

His letter was accompanied by what was meant to be a conciliatory one from Marshal Count Ro-

mantzoff, wherein he enlarged on the prejudices in favour of birth, the instability and insufficiency of riches, and most absurdly (not to say worse of it, as my acquaintance with him never warranted such an interference) seemed to counsel me on a point of the greatest moment between me and my son.

I answered him civilly enough, but sarcastically. I said, that amongst the many other follies which filled my head, I had never happened to attach an enthusiastic or exaggerated idea to the advantages of high birth, but if I had had the good fortune to possess a portion of that eloquence which his excellency could so ably display, I would endeavour to do justice to the preference which I should always give to a good education, and its usual result, a good character, over the more shewy but less substantial objects of a childish ambition.

To my son, I wrote only these few words:— "When your father wished to marry Countess Catharine Worontzoff, he drove post to Moscow to gain his mother's consent. You are already married; I have known it some time; and I also know that my mother-in-law was not more deserving than myself to have a friend in her son."

A feverish complaint continued to hang upon me; I lost all appetite for food, and wasted away perceptibly. I was alone, without one of my natural relations in the house, and I fancied myself alone in the universe, having lost the consolation of those

whose love had never failed to afford it under every former affliction.

Towards winter, feeling a little better as to bodily health, I resumed my duties as director of the one academy and president of the other. In furtherance of the work of our dictionary, I assigned myself the task of collecting all the words beginning with three letters of the alphabet. I undertook also a labour which had been adjudged me at a general meeting of the academy—namely, to render an explanation in precise terms of all the words which had especial reference to the three great subjects of morals, politics, and government.

This latter work, to me no easy one, engrossed much of my attention, and for a large portion of every day suspended the train of melancholy ideas which had long beset me. I never went into company, except once or twice a week to pass the evening with her majesty, at what were called her little select parties.

In the spring, I went to occupy a country place of my father's, which, being more distant from town than my own, afforded a more complete retirement; and my solitude was not once interrupted, for the few visitors who came were never admitted. Here I spent the whole summer in so desponding a state of mind, that I can attribute it only to the mercy of Providence that I did not yield to the suggestions of despair. Abandoned by

my children, life had become a burthen which I longed to be relieved from, and willingly would I have exposed myself to the attack of any one who sought to rid me of an existence I could no longer enjoy. This disposition of mind continued, or rather increased, during the following year, when I obtained permission to visit my estates in White Russia and Troitskoe.*

* * * * * *

In truth, the past, the present, and the future were equally gloomy, and offered not in contemplation a single point of comfort on which to rest my thoughts. Ideas, indeed, the most horrible had seized upon me. I shudder as I acknowledge that the crime of self-destruction was amongst the number; and had my mind been uninfluenced by religion, that supporter of human misery, that blessed shield against despair, I cannot say to what extremities my agonized feelings might not have hurried me. Of this I am certain, that neither the conviction of suicide being always the act of a coward, nor any force of reasoning, could have availed to save me from myself, for I was too

* Two or three pages are here occupied, in the princess's manuscript, in referring to some circumstances which had deeply and most painfully afflicted her; but as these are altogether of a private and domestic nature, in which one of the parties concerned may possibly still be living, the Editor thinks herself justified in passing them over.

miserable to be governed by reasoning, by pride, or by any human motive whatever. I longed, ardently longed for the stroke of death, but I hesitated to inflict it with my own hand. It was religion alone which restrained me.

CHAPTER XIII.

Dinners at the court—True courage—Suicide—Sophistry of Rousseau—His vanity and quackery—The princess composes a drama—It is acted at the imperial theatre—Foresight of the princess—A youthful traitor—An act of kindness—Its ill consequences—Count Samoiloff—The suspected tragedy—Anger of the empress—Conduct of the princess—The empress pacified—Court anecdotes.

This winter I suffered less than usual from rheumatism, a liability to which had been much increased by the damp situation of my country house. I was able to drive out in my carriage to take the air, and I dined, as formerly, twice a week with the empress.

A subject to which I have just adverted reminds me of a conversation which passed at one of these dinners. Count Bruce, then general-adjutant on duty for the week, happening to speak of courage, expressed his astonishment at the display of it which he had seen in soldiers, when scaling the walls of a town in face of a furious cannonade. "One need not be surprised," I said, "at this, for the greatest coward existing could assume a momentary courage to fly to an assault, which he

knew must soon be over. Besides, if you will excuse me, count, it is not that species of daring displayed in battle which we can properly designate by the name of courage, but that heroic quality which, with a perfect self-denial, and assurance of miseries and dangers it has to encounter, knows how to devote itself to a lasting and indefinite endurance of them. If with a blunt wooden blade you could submit to have your flesh sawed in any particular part of your body, and could bear it patiently, I should look upon you as a much more courageous character than he who could without shrinking maintain his post for hours before an enemy."

The empress understood me; but the count commenced a train of argument which was not very clear, and cited suicide as a proof of courage. During what followed, whilst I endeavoured to shew the exact contrary of this assertion, and spoke with a feeling and animation which evinced, perhaps, the late tenour and conflict of my thoughts, the empress never took her eyes off me.

When I had said all that then occurred to me, and much less than might be said, and what I thought of afterwards, I turned to her majesty, and with a smile assured her that nothing could ever impel *me* either to accelerate or to seek to retard my death; for in spite of the sophisms of J. J. Rousseau, who had captivated me in my youth, (though even then I was a lover of courage,) I must

always hold my opinion, that to suffer is a much truer test of that admirable virtue than to employ a remedy against suffering which one can have no right to use.

The empress inquired what was the sophism of Rousseau's to which I alluded, and in which of his works I had read it.

" In the New Eloise," said I, " he asserts that one ought not to fear death, because as long as we live death cannot be, and when death comes we are no more."

" He is a very dangerous author," replied her majesty; " his style infatuates and turns the heads of young people."

" I never could bring myself to see him, madam," said I, " when I was in Paris at the same time with him. His conceit of being *incognito*, whilst he was devoured with the ambition of making every one talk of him, and filling the whole world with interest for his person, shewed a mountebank modesty which was really intolerable. His writings, as your majesty has observed, are certainly dangerous, for with young heads it is not difficult to make sophisms pass for syllogisms."

From this day the empress never allowed a single opportunity to escape of giving some new turn to my thoughts; and I was not the person to be insensible to such proofs of kindness.

One morning that we were together, tête-à-tête, the empress begged of me to compose some little dramatic

piece in the Russian language, for her theatre at the Hermitage. In vain I represented that I had not a shadow of the talent necessary for such a composition. Her majesty urged her request, and told me that her reason for doing so was simply the assurance she felt from her own experience, that such an occupation would both interest and amuse me.

I was induced at length to promise compliance, under one condition, that her majesty would revise the two first acts when written, and either correct them, or candidly bid me throw them into the fire.

This was agreed upon, and I set to work that evening. The next day I finished my two acts, and carried them the day following to the empress. The piece was named after its principal personage, Mr. *This and that;* a title which I thought, from its want of any particular application, would not give offence to any one, as my hero was one of the most general description possible,—that is to say, a man without any sort of character at all; for with such beings our Petersburg societies unfortunately swarmed.

Her majesty was so good as to retire with me into her chamber, to read over my impromptu, which, to say the truth, I really thought very unworthy of the honour. She laughed over several scenes, and whether it was from the same good nature that urged me to the attempt, or her accus-

tomed partiality, she pronounced it perfect of its kind. I explained the plan of the third act, which was to contain the denouëment of the piece. Here she objected, and insisted on having five acts. This I thought would be an injudicious extension, and, to say nothing of fatiguing me, would materially weaken the interest of the plot. However, I obeyed, and finished it as well as I could; and in two days more it was put, fairly copied, into her majesty's hands. Soon afterwards it was performed at the Hermitage, and ordered to be printed.

About the beginning of the next year, I obtained her majesty's permission for my son's absenting himself two or three months from his regiment, in order to make a journey to Warsaw, to pay his sister's debts, and accompany her back to her own country. For this purpose I deprived myself of all the ready money I had, and lived on credit for six months, until some rents were due.

My son performed this journey, did what was required, and conveyed his sister to Kiof, where he was quartered. It was from Kiof that I heard these particulars from both of them. It might then be called years since I had received a letter from either; and as no person or passion had occupied their place in my heart, it is easy to conceive the wretched void I had experienced.

My brother, Count Alexander, had under his orders, in the department of commerce and the

custom house, a young man of the name of Raditcheff, a late student at Leipsic, for whom he had a particular regard. One day, at the Russian Academy, I was shewn, as a proof that we had writers but little acquainted with their own language, a pamphlet which had been written and published by this same Raditcheff. It was the life and eulogium of one Ushakoff, a fellow student with him at Leipsic. I spoke of this piece that same evening to my brother, who sent immediately to a bookseller's to procure the work; and I remarked that his protegé had in this performance exhibited an itch for authorship, but neither ideas nor style, except some few of the former, which might in the present times be looked upon as dangerous. A few days afterwards my brother said that he thought I had judged too severely of Raditcheff's little pamphlet; that he had read it, and though he must confess it was a publication very little called for, as the person thus brought into notice had never done or said anything remarkable in his life, yet it could not fairly be accused of anything worse.

"Perhaps," said I, "there was some severity in my criticism; but since you interested yourself about the author, I wished to tell you with what I was struck on reading the work, which was, that when a man had existed only to eat, to drink, and to sleep, he could never have found a panegyrist, except in one possessed with the folly of writing at all hazards; and that this mania of authorship might

probably impel your protegé one day or other to write something really reprehensible."

And so it really turned out; for the following summer, whilst I was resident at Troitskoe, I received a letter from my brother, who in great distress informed me that my surmises relative to Raditcheff had been but too just—that he had published a work which, he grieved to say, was of such a nature as sounded a *tocsin* to revolution; in consequence of which he had been arrested, and was banished into Siberia.

Far from feeling gratified at the fulfilment of my prediction, I was much concerned at the fate of Raditcheff, the more so on account of my brother, who being extremely interested in his welfare, would deeply lament his imprudence, and its unhappy result. I foresaw, at the same time, that the then favourite, from motives of former pique, would seek occasion to implicate the patron of this young man in the disgrace of his protegé.

The attempt was made with some dexterity, but it failed to make the least impression prejudicial to the party intended on the mind of the great Catherine.

My brother, however, took some disgust, which, added to the intrigues of the procureur-general, put him into such ill humour with the court, that under the plea of ill health, which made quiet and the country air necessary, he demanded his congé for a year. The leave he sought was granted; and when I lost his society I again felt myself alone in Peters-

burg, in a circle growing daily more and more odious to me; but I flattered myself with the hope of his return as soon as the above-mentioned period should have expired. In this I was disappointed; before the year had elapsed he asked and obtained his dismissal from office. It was in the year 1794 that he finished his public career, which had been alike useful to his country and honourable to himself.

A year and a half after the retirement of my brother, the widow of one of our most famous tragic poets (M. Kniejnine) begged of me to have printed, for the benefit of his children, the last tragedy he had composed, which as yet had not been published. As it was one of the counsellors of the chancery of the academy who made this application, (M. Kasadawleff,) I told him I would give the orders he desired as soon as he had himself looked over the work, and could assure me that it contained nothing offensive, either to our laws or our religion, and that I charged him so much the more readily with this commission, as being himself an author perfectly conversant in our native language, and a very competent judge of what was or was not fit to be published in it.

This gentleman made his report that the tragedy was founded on some historic facts which had happened at Novogorod, that he perceived nothing reprehensible in the sentiments or language, and that the denouëment of the piece was the triumph

of a Russian monarch, with the submission of Novogorod and the rebels.

Upon this report I ordered the work to be printed, and in such a way as to put the widow of its author to as little expense as possible. It would puzzle ingenuity itself to conceive how this little affair could give rise to the absurdities it really occasioned.

Marshal Count Ivan Soltikoff, whom no one could accuse of ever having read a book in his life, pretended, at somebody's instigation, to have read this tragedy, and going full of it to the favourite, Prince Zouboff, told him of its very dangerous tendency in the present times. Whether the empress or Prince Zouboff ever read it I am unable to say; but I was soon surprised by a visit from the grand master of police, who very politely asked for an order of admittance into the magazine of books belonging to the academy, that he might, in compliance with her majesty's command, seize on every copy he could find of the said tragedy, as the empress considered it too dangerous for circulation.

I gave him the power he demanded, telling him that I did not think he would find a single copy; but that in the last volume of the Russian Theatre, which the academy had printed for its own advantage, he would find this piece inserted, and that, if he chose to spoil the volume, he was quite at liberty to tear it out, though he must excuse my laughing at the imputed danger of this unlucky

work, which, in truth, was far less hostile to the cause of sovereigns than most of the French tragedies exhibited at the Hermitage.

That afternoon, no less a personage than M. Samoiloff, procureur-general of the senate, came to reproach me on the part of her majesty for the publication of this piece. Whether the object of this formal censure was to offend or to intimidate me I know not, but the promoters of it certainly failed in producing either effect. I answered Count Samoiloff very coolly, and with great firmness, expressing my surprise that her majesty could for a moment be led to suppose me a person capable of disseminating anything inimical to her interests; and as to the allusion, he told me, the empress had made to the work of Raditcheff, in saying that the tragedy of Kneijnine was the second work of a dangerous nature which had been published, I merely hinted that they would do well to compare them, especially the latter piece, on which they were about to wreak their vengeance, with the current French dramas exhibited in the public as well as in the private theatres. With regard to some opinions passed on it, I begged to observe, they were nothing to me, who had subjected it to the inspection and censorship of one of the academic council (Kazadawleff) before permission was given to the widow of its author to have it published for her profit; and therefore I sincerely hoped to hear nothing more on such a subject.

I did not omit to attend as usual her majesty's little assembly the next evening. As she entered the room, I observed a certain expression of uneasiness, not without a portion of resentment, in her countenance. I went up to her, and asked how she did. "Very well," she replied; "but pray what have I done that you should publish against me and my authority such dangerous maxims?"

"Is it possible you can think such things of me, madam?" I exclaimed.

"I'll tell you what," said the empress, "this tragedy shall be burned by the hand of the common executioner."

The sentiment which this phrase bespoke was so perfectly unlike anything that ever fell from the empress, that I was happy to perceive something in the tone and manner of uttering it which clearly convinced me that it had been dictated by somebody about her.

"And what does it signify to me, madam," I returned, "whether it be burned by the executioner or not? it is not I who shall have reason to blush for it. But, in the name of Heaven, madam, before you commit yourself in anything so little in accordance with your character, let me entreat you to read this unlucky piece, in which you will find just such a catastrophe as you yourself and every wellwisher to a monarchical government could desire. But at the same time be pleased to remember, that in be-

speaking your mercy on the work in question, I am neither its author, nor the one to profit by its publication."

This being said in a way which did not well admit of a reply, the conversation dropped. The empress then sat down to her card-table, and I followed her example.

The next morning I went to make some official report to her majesty, determined that if she did not receive me with her usual marks of confidence, and admit me, as was her custom, into her jewel chamber,* where she made her toilet, and allowed me to converse with her without ceremony, I would give up these visits altogether, and ask for my dismissal from office.

I was met in the audience room by M. Samoiloff, as he was leaving the presence of the empress, who cautioned me in a whisper to keep myself cool, for her majesty would be visible in a few moments; "and she appears to have no sort of rancour," added he, "towards you."

I answered, in my ordinary tone of voice, so as to be heard by all who happened to be near, "I have no reason, my good sir, to be otherwise than

* It was the chamber where the great and small crown of brilliants, as well as other objects of jewellery, were exposed. Hither I was usually taken by the empress after I had presented myself in the chamber of toilette, and here we remained tête-à-tête without ceremony, whilst the operation of hair-dressing &c. was performing.

cool, for I have nothing to reproach myself with, and I am not going to reproach others; although I confess, on her majesty's account, I should be really sorry were she to entertain an unjust sentiment or suspicion relative to me. But injustice is what I am so much accustomed to, that it has long ceased to be any novelty whatever."

The empress soon made her appearance, and after having given her hand to kiss to those who formed her morning circle, she turned to me, and said, in her usual manner, "I am ready to attend you, princess; have the goodness to accompany me."

I hope the readers of this memoir will believe me, and not impute it to any presumptuous feeling, when I say, that the inexpressible delight with which I heard this invitation was more on the empress's account than my own, as I very painfully anticipated that had she acted otherwise, my resignation and departure from Petersburg would not have been to her honour.

Happy that this foolish affair had not taken such a turn as to have occasioned a breach with her majesty, I had scarcely reached the next room when, holding out my hand, in the warmth of my heart I entreated the empress would give me hers to kiss, and forget what had lately passed.

"But indeed, princess," said her majesty—

"Yes, madam," said I, interrupting her, and repeating a vulgar Russian proverb—"*The grey cat has jumped between us, and let us not call it back.*"

The empress had the goodness to enter into the whim of thus lightly treating what was in truth not worthy of graver notice; and laughing good humouredly, she gave a turn to the subject. I staid to dine with her majesty, and had the pleasure of perceiving that not the slightest trace of anger remained on her mind. I seemed, indeed, to have inspired her with the gaiety which I felt myself; for she encouraged with the utmost playfulness, and condescended to laugh at, with all her heart, the little sallies of pleasantry to which the exuberance of my own spirits had given rise.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Aspect of political affairs—The princess determines to retire from public life—Family matters—Pecuniary arrangements—The princess asks leave to retire—The empress refuses—Regret at quitting the empress—Her character—Errors in the published histories of her life—Her literary acquirements—Leave-taking—The Grand Duke Alexander—Court intrigue—Prince Zouboff—The princess quits Petersburg—Visit to Count Worontzow—His character—Return to Moscow—The princess's estate of Troitskoe—Letters from court—The Grand Duchess Alexandra.

PUBLIC affairs were now wearing the most pleasing aspect. The war with Sweden had been terminated. That with the Turks seemed to promise the happiest results—such, indeed, as the intrepidity of our soldiers, and the able conduct of some of our most patriotic and distinguished officers, could not fail to produce. A treaty with this power was on the point of being signed, which all the subsequent artifice and intrigues of the French could not induce the Turks to break, so little inclination remained on their part again to measure their strength in the field with the Russian army.

I was extremely desirous of again seeing my brother, as well as of revisiting my favourite country abode. These feelings were strengthened by a serious resolution I had lately formed, of withdrawing myself entirely from public life, and quitting the tumult of an imperial residence; but I was unwilling finally to bid adieu to Petersburg until I had arranged the means of settling with my daughter's creditors, and of paying a debt to the bank of thirty-two thousand roubles, which I had myself incurred to pay my own and my son's expenses abroad.

As I now had no other wish than to pass the remainder of my days in repose, and occupy myself solely in the objects and pursuits of a rural life, I determined immediately to sell my house in Petersburg, but not to leave the town until I had divested myself of those pecuniary engagements, the existence of which I felt quite incompatible with tranquillity and independence.

I should here mention that M. Scherbinin had made over to his wife a very pretty small estate, as well as one to his cousin, Madame B——. His mother and sisters had obtained from the senate the power of managing the rest of his property, and were not, perhaps, without a hope of setting aside these donations. The law, however, for the preservation and management of the property of individuals accused of incapacity, which had delegated this power to their trust, rendering the resumption of it on the part of the person deprived extremely

easy, M. Scherbinin would have had little more to do in order to recover this power than to make application for it, and to answer a set form of questions. This, it seems, he had no inclination to attempt, being fully persuaded by his mother and sister that in the step they had taken they had consulted his interest alone, and had acted greatly to his advantage.

As Scherbinin's affairs were thus circumstanced, I was the more induced to examine strictly the particulars of my daughter's engagements to her creditors, for which I had become security, before I sent her to Aix-la-Chapelle. I called in all the bills and obligations of every kind which were in force against her, that I might ascertain the nature of them, and see what she herself, by the acknowledgment of her own signature, had admitted to be just. Among the bills presented to me I found several signed by her husband as well as by herself, specifying a variety of articles which could have been ordered only for the exclusive use of Scherbinin.

To have made myself responsible for such as these would have been at once to make myself a voluntary dupe. I therefore addressed myself to the trustees of his property, and it was from them I then learned that the conveyance of the abovementioned estate to Madame Scherbinin by her husband had been drawn out and sanctioned by all the formalities of law.

If on this point, I observed to them, any doubt or difficulty existed, application should be at once

made to the senate, which could alone ratify or annul the gift.

I begged them in the mean time to inspect the bills which had been sent to me, and then conscientiously to determine on such as I ought wholly to discharge, on such as they would take upon themselves to pay on account of M. Scherbinin, and on such as ought to be defrayed conjointly.

A question, therefore, as to the right of making over this estate was referred to the senate. I did not appear in the smallest degree anxious for a decision in my daughter's favour, as I honestly confess I could not from my heart desire it, convinced as I was that she had had but too large a share already in the dissipation of her husband's fortune. I was able, indeed, to say on this occasion to the procureur-general, whose influence in the senate was sufficient to decide the question, that a speedy decision was the only thing which I anxiously looked for, and that being gained, I should know what I had to do, and could then depart for Moscow.

My house was already disposed of, and I was inhabiting, if so it may be called, a vast deserted palace of my father's, with just as many servants only as were absolutely necessary to me; in other respects I was alone, and like an ill-fated lady of romance, doomed, as it would seem, by her evil genius, to a long imprisonment in this capacious solitude.

At length the decision of the senate broke the spell, and set me at liberty. It was given in favour

of my daughter, and was confirmed by her majesty. I paid the greater part of the bills which had been presented to me, and for the payment of some I required a stipulated term, giving my own personal security for their due discharge.

The management of this property of my daughter, which now devolved on me, I did not turn to a very lucrative account. On the contrary, the payments with which I charged the peasantry were so moderate that it made them perfectly happy, but yielded scarcely a sufficient revenue to pay the interest of the sums which I had advanced.

Having thus arranged these pecuniary concerns, I by letter requested her majesty to give me my formal dismissal from the care of the two academies, and her leave as a lady of the palace to absent myself from the court for two years, for the benefit of my declining health, and the settlement of my affairs.

The empress would not hear of my finally withdrawing from the academy, and limited her acquiescence to my request of two years' absence. In vain I represented the inconvenience which must arise to an academy of science, more than to any other institution, from the absence of its chief. She insisted that a deputy should be appointed, who should receive my instructions, and act under my orders, and that though absent I should continue the efficient director, and enjoy the emolument of the situation.

The empress expressed to Count Besborodka her

distress at the idea of my withdrawing from court; and although, on my part, I had long cherished the hope of living in retirement, and enjoying again my brother's society, which I ardently desired, I could not entertain the thought of seeing my sovereign perhaps for the last time, without emotions of heart-felt sorrow; a sovereign whom, long before she was such, I loved so passionately and so disinterestedly; for I loved her when she had less the power of conferring benefits on me than I had of rendering services to her; and though her conduct towards me was not in every instance such as her own heart and head would have dictated, I never ceased to feel and acknowledge those ties of enthusiastic affection and admiration which first bound me to her person and her service.

With what pride and delight have I ever dwelt on those actions of the empress Catherine's life and reign which did honour to herself; and in these I recognised that noble and capacious mind which exalted her in my estimation far above every sovereign who had hitherto filled the throne of Russia.

I have lately been reading two works published in Russia; one is styled the "Life of Catherine the Great," and the other, "Anecdotes of the Reign of Catherine II." They are written with feelings which all true Russians entertain and ought to cherish towards a sovereign who might be truly called the mother of her subjects. I must, however, remark upon a mistake which occurs equally in both these works. It is said that the empress Catherine un-

derstood both Greek and Latin, and that amongst the modern languages French was the one which she preferred, as the most agreeable for conversation.

I believe I may positively assert that she did not know either Greek or Latin, and that if she spoke French to foreigners in preference to her native German, it was only because she wished Russia to forget that she was born in Germany. In this object she succeeded so well, that in many conversations I have held with our Russian peasants, they invariably called her their *countrywoman* as well as their *mother*.

In conversing with herself on the different authors and languages of Europe, I have often heard her say how much richer and more energetic she thought the German language than the French, and that it was a pity it was not softer, in which case French would never have become so universal. She added, that our Russian language, uniting as it does both the strength, the richness, and the energy of the German with the sweetness of the Italian, would one day become the standard language of the world.

At length, everything being arranged for my departure, I went to pass my last evening with the empress at the Tauride Palace. She loaded me with the most affectionate attentions; and I really knew not how to take my final leave. At the accustomed hour of retiring her majesty withdrew, and as I was attempting to follow, and ask permission to take leave in her private apartment, I found

my way impeded by the presence of the Grand Duke Alexander and his lovely wife. Prince Zouboff was in conversation with their imperial highnesses.

I begged him, in a whisper, to let me pass, as I was hastening to kiss the empress's hand (perhaps for the last time) before my departure, which was fixed for the following day. "Wait a moment, madam," said he, and presently disappeared. I took for granted that he was going to tell her majesty what I desired, but a good half hour passed, and no messenger approached me. I went into the next chamber, and meeting one of the empress's valets-de-chambre, I requested him to inform her majesty that I was waiting for permission to kiss her hand before I quitted Petersburg. Another quarter of an hour elapsed, and he returned to say, the empress was ready to receive me.

On entering her apartment, what was my astonishment when, in place of the serene countenance which had beamed on me all the evening, and instead of the expected affectionate adieu, I was met with a look which evinced much discomposure, and even anger. "I wish you, madam, a good journey," was all she uttered!

When those who are accustomed strictly to judge themselves are unconscious of having given offence, they are not apt to conceive that offence is taken. This was precisely my case. So little did I impute to myself the cause of her majesty's altered

mien and manners, that I apprehended she had received some intelligence of a vexatious nature, which had thus painfully wrought upon her feelings; and putting up a silent prayer for her prosperity and happiness, I withdrew.

The next morning M. Navasiltzoff, a relative of Maria Isavishna, who was of the empress's household, and much in her majesty's confidence, came to take leave of me. I asked if any courier had arrived last night with disagreeable news, to occasion the strange alteration I had observed in her majesty before I took my leave. I was wholly at a loss how to account for it, when I learned that he had just come from the palace, and was sure no unpleasant report had reached it, for the empress had never appeared in better humour.

Presently a letter arrived from the empress's secretary, M. Trochinsky, which unveiled to me the enigma. The letter was accompanied by a tailor's bill, signed by my daughter and her husband, and along with it a most affecting petition from the tradesman himself, drawn up in a manner greatly to interest and flatter the empress. The secretary informed me, on the part of her majesty, that she was astonished how I could think of quitting Petersburg without performing the promise I had made of paying my daughter's debts.

It must be confessed, I was utterly indignant on reading this letter, and I then firmly resolved that I would quit Petersburg for ever. I wrote, in

answer to M. Trochinsky, that I was no less astonished than her majesty in finding myself for a moment suspected of a conduct which must degrade me in her eyes; that I had returned the bill, by which the empress might perceive, if she would take the trouble of having it examined, how little my daughter had to do with the articles in question; that they were uniforms, liveries, &c., ordered by M. Scherbinin himself for his own person and servants; that I had made no engagement to pay the bills of my son-in-law, who possessed, even now, means quite equal to mine; and, moreover, that I had referred this very tradesman to the trustees of M. Scherbinin's property, who had in my presence guaranteed the payment of this very account, as the debt regarded M. Scherbinin alone, in two months at the latest;* with which the man himself expressed complete satisfaction; and if after that he happened to change his mind, or if any one had dictated the sort of petition he had presented, with a view of injuring me, I left it to her majesty to say whether I, in justice, ought to be the sufferer.

This latter surmise turned out to be the truth. It was, in fact, a sycophant of Prince Zouboff who composed the petition, and it was Prince Zouboff himself, as I afterwards discovered, who, on leaving me on the above-mentioned evening, went to deliver

* This debt was, in fact, paid by M. Scherbinin's trustees, two or three months afterwards.

it to the empress before I could be admitted into her apartment.

I had now seen Catherine the Second for the last time; and although Prince Zouboff had in this instance done me a wrong which I had reason painfully to remember for the rest of my life, I received him afterwards as usual, at Petersburg, after Alexander's accession to the throne, and also at Moscow, after his majesty's coronation, when others received him in a very different manner.

At length I quitted Petersburg, with a mixture of opposite sensations, which would have been but of one kind, if the sentiments I had long cherished for the empress had been capable of alteration or abatement.

I took a circuitous route, in order to visit my estate in White Russia, and to make arrangements for the receipt of certain sums of money which were destined to pay my daughter's creditors. I stayed there but eight days, and delayed but a week at my favourite Troitskoe, so impatient was I again to see my brother.

The road to his house lay through Moscow, and there also I remained only as long as was necessary to give some orders for the arrangement and fitting up, in the simplest manner possible, but with all requisite convenience, of the ground-floor of my house, which was to serve for the ensuing winter's residence.

I now considered my public career as at an end;

and if, throughout its course, my head may have been proof against the intoxication of success, arising from any of those circumstances wherein my vanity was most concerned, and especially from those which related to my management of the two academies, it will not be thought strange that I should stoutly sustain the several shocks and disappointments which, on the other hand, I was destined to encounter; for it is my fixed belief that any one may resist misfortune who can once vanquish his own ambition, and can restrain his self-love within certain bounds.

Fraternal friendship, and the occupations of the country, were the only objects which I had now in view; and I contemplated the approaching change in my mode of life, not only with satisfaction, but with a calm pleasure, except when a certain reflection would intrude itself, accompanied with heart-felt regret that those whom I most loved and esteemed had acted unworthy of themselves, by the unmerited injustice which had been occasionally inflicted on me.

My arrival at my brother's house was to him a most agreeable surprise; and the time we passed together was a period of mutual enjoyment. Friendship, rather than consanguinity, cemented the bond which had long united our hearts. This, too, was aided by a sympathy arising out of circumstances. Each had run a public career, and each had retired from the world with sentiments so similar, the fruit

of our experience in it, that language was scarcely needed for the interchange of our opinions, or to make us comprehend each other.

My brother was a man of sense and knowledge, but reserved, grave, precise, and even cold, in society. This dissimilarity between us in manners and disposition was far from tending to interrupt our friendship.

The time destined for this visit passed happily, and too quickly. I found it necessary to return to Moscow, after a stay as prolonged as possible, to see my apartments properly arranged and provided with stoves, for the reception of myself and friends, before the frost set in. These necessary works I superintended, and had soon the pleasure of receiving my brother at Moscow, who came earlier to town that winter than usual.

The next year, he came to visit me at Troitskoe. He was delighted with my works of improvement. The gardens, the plantations, and the buildings, with which I was then beautifying the place, were perfectly to his taste. When I returned his visit, in the autumn, he gave me full power to exercise my skill in new-modelling his grounds, and in continuing the plantations, which I had formed in a very few days the preceding year.

In the summer of 1796 I went to my estate at Mohiloff, where I received letters from several persons in Petersburg, who were well informed of everything which was said and done at court.

From these I had intimation that my presence amongst them would be most acceptable, as the empress had more than once expressed her intention of writing to invite me to Petersburg, with a view of my conducting the Grand Duchess Alexandra into Sweden, in the event of her marriage with the king.

I received letters also from my relations at Moscow, expressive of their regrets at my absence, and assuring me that a courier had been already dispatched from the empress, to request my return to Petersburg. This news hastened my return to Troitskoe, whence I wrote to her majesty, again soliciting my dismissal, or at least the prolongation of my absence.

I received a very gracious letter in reply, which prolonged my leave for another year; but under a sort of apprehension that this request might have been taken ill, I wrote to some confidential friends to beg they would honestly say in what terms the empress spoke of me, and whether any feelings of displeasure had been lately manifested. Their answers went to assure me that her majesty had frequently alluded to me as the person of all others she would most wish to conduct her grandaughter into Sweden, and in such terms as the following:— "I am persuaded that Princess Daschkaw loves me enough not to refuse what I have so much at heart; in which case I shall be quite at ease on the subject of my young queen."

CHAPTER XXV.

A country life—The peasantry of the princess's estate—The princess's library—Death of the Empress Catherine—Dangerous illness of the princess in consequence—Her forebodings of evil to Russia—She is dismissed by the Emperor Paul—A dilemma—Fatal consequences of the empress's death—The princess ordered to quit Moscow—Her predictions respecting the emperor's treatment of her—Projects of the princess—Retrospection—Count Momonoff—Paul's feelings towards his mother—Melancholy changes—The emperor's persecution of the princess—She is ordered to quit Troitskoe—Consternation of the princess's family—Noble conduct of her English companion—Painful position of the princess.

On my return from Krouglo to Troitskoe I applied myself to the completion of my buildings. Four houses were finished, and I had formed plantations, which made the grounds, to me at least, a perfect paradise. There was not a tree, not a shrub, which I had not planted, or which had not been planted under my directions in the spot which I had assigned it. So natural, indeed, it is to view with complacency the work of one's own hands, that every one will credit the sincerity of my own opinion in regarding Troitskoe as the most beautiful

and embellished of all the fine country places I had seen, either in Russia or in any part of my travels.

There was one circumstance, above all others, which rendered Troitskoe, as a residence, pleasing and consolatory in the highest degree, and that was, the prosperous and happy condition of its peasantry. Their numbers, during the forty years of my proprietorship, increased from eight hundred and forty to fifteen hundred and fifty-nine. I speak of the male population, which alone is reckoned with us; and the women, it may be admitted, increased in at least an equal ratio, for few would ever consent to a marriage which removed them from my estate, though the young men would sometimes choose their wives from among the neighbouring peasantry.

I had been in the habit of adding to my library, which had now become considerable. The ground-floor of my house was comfortably furnished and arranged for my residence during the autumn, a season usually bringing along with it a recurrence of the rheumatism, the fruits of my Scottish expedition. I did not escape this year, but was a sufferer from its attacks during the month of October and at the beginning of November, at the period when the catastrophe took place the most fatal which could have happened to Russia, and which brought me to the very brink of the grave.

The seneschal of Serpoukoff, M. Grigoroff, a most estimable and loyal man, and a friend of mine, came one evening to my house. The moment he

entered I was shocked at the consternation and dismay of his countenance. " For Heaven's sake," I exclaimed, " what's the matter ?"

" Have you not heard, madam," said he, " the misfortune which has happened ? *The empress is no more.*"

My daughter, who was with me, ran to my support, fearing I should fall.

" No, no," said I ; " fear not for my life ; to sink under this calamity would be too great a happiness ; I am reserved for the worst of misfortunes,—to see my country as fallen and unhappy as once she was great and prosperous."

A general tremor throughout my frame, followed by acute spasms, rendered me for four and twenty hours an object of commiseration to all about me, whilst I experienced the painful certainty that I was destined still to live.

The words I uttered on the first shock of my feelings were, alas ! but too prophetic. Terror, alarm, inquietude, were from that moment the only and constant companions of every bosom. There was soon not a single family which had not among its members some victim to deplore. The husband, the father, the uncle, dreaded in the wife, the child, the heir, an informer who might send him to perish in the dungeon, or in the wastes of Siberia.

I soon received an intimation, contained in an ukase, that the emperor had dismissed me from his services ; on which I begged M. Samoiloff, who still

continued procureur-general of the senate, to present my submissive gratitude to his majesty, for having relieved me of a burden far above my strength.

Having written a letter to this effect, I had nothing to do but to meet with resignation the persecution which awaited me; but I found myself in a ridiculous dilemma, from which I was rather at a loss how to extricate myself. The formal notification of my dismissal from office was contained in a letter signed simply *Danaouroff*, without the Christian name and patronymic;* which latter, it is well known, is used in Russia, often in conversation, but always in addition to the two other names, to designate the person whom one addresses by letter. As I was quite ignorant of the name subscribed in this instance, and could not even guess at the father's, I was reduced to my wit's end to know how to answer it; for not to acknowledge the emperor's mandate would have been a crime against the emperor; and to curtail the personage charged with this commission, of any portion of his due style of address and quality, would have implied that sort of contempt for my correspondent which could not have failed to make him my enemy. I therefore wrote to my cousin, Prince Kourakin, who was understood to be well at court at the moment, begging him to assure M. Danaouroff that I had omitted

* As, for example, Ivan Ivanovitch Danaouroff; John, the son of John Danaouroff.

to answer his letter immediately, only that I might not fail in any becoming respect to the writer, having still to learn the style and manner of his address; and with regard to its contents, I had to acknowledge the dismissal it notified as an act of favour on the part of his majesty.

I communicated to my brother, Count Alexander, what had happened, and what was my surprise to learn that the said M. Danaouroff was neither more nor less than the son of a person who had formerly served my uncle, the grand chancellor, in the capacity of an under butler, and having married a Calmuc slave, distinguished by my aunt amongst her maids, had been promoted to the keeping of the key of the cellar, and to the post of head butler in the family!

The news of arrests and exiles, which daily became more frequent, could not fail to reach even my ears, notwithstanding the pains my friends took to prevent any communications which might aggravate my present distress.

The death of Catherine was a profound and overwhelming affliction. I was appalled at the miserable change of circumstances, and at the terror which seemed to stupify the whole nation; for there was not a family among the nobles which had not to lament one at least of its members hurried off into banishment or the fortress.

The complaint under which I was suffering, added to the state of my feelings, rendered existence

utterly painful; but that I might not voluntarily seek its abridgment, I consented to go to Moscow,—not to consult physicians, for I had no opinion of their skill, but to try what effect an application of leeches might have in composing the irritation of my blood, and giving it a more regular circulation.

After a confinement of some days to my bed, with a recurrence of spasms, I was enabled to set out from Troitskoe, resolved to return immediately on accomplishing the single object I had in view. I reached Moscow about nine o'clock in the morning of the 4th of December, and found several of my relatives anxiously waiting to see me, fearful of the effects of my grief for the death of Catherine the Second.

In a few minutes afterwards my brother, Count Alexander, arrived. I found myself compelled to go to bed; and it was scarcely noon when the governor-general, M. Ishmailoff, entered the apartment. He seemed in a hurry; but just allowing himself time to sit down, he said in a low voice, that he had come, in obedience to the commands of the emperor, to signify his majesty's pleasure that I should return instantly into the country, and there recollect the epoch of 1762.

I answered, in a tone audible to my friends around, that I should never forget that year, and would punctually obey his majesty's orders, in reflecting on what I never thought of with either grief or remorse; a subject perhaps which, if dis-

passionately considered, might entitle me to better treatment than what I now experienced at his majesty's hands. I then begged his excellency to observe how unable I was to make an instantaneous retreat; that I had come for a particular operation necessary to my health, and that the very next evening, or at latest the morning following, should witness my departure from Moscow. The governor then made his bow and retired.

Every creature in the room except myself was filled with amazement and concern. My brother was so deeply affected that I had much to do to keep up his spirits.

The part I had to act was settled. I left Moscow on the 6th of December; but my health continued a mere struggle between life and death;—though in this state, I wrote every other day to my brother, and to some of my other relatives alternately, many of whom, and my brother in particular, often assured me in their answers, after cautioning me to be patient and to take care of my health, that this conduct of Paul towards me was the consequence of some notion of respect due to the memory of his father. "Wait," he would add, "until after his coronation, and you will then see a wide change in his conduct."

I will just transcribe a reply I made to my brother on this occasion, as one amongst many of my predictions which have been accomplished:—"You tell me, my dear friend, that after his coronation

Paul will let me rest undisturbed. Believe me, you are greatly deceived in his character. When once a tyrant has begun to strike his victim, he repeats the blows until he is sure of its total destruction. I have made up my mind to unrelenting persecutions, and I am ready to submit to them all, with the resignation which is due from a creature to the will of its Creator. A consciousness of innocence, and a feeling of indignation unmingled with rancour, at that which menaces my own personal safety, will serve me, I trust, in place of courage, as long as you and other dear relatives are forgotten in the activity of his malevolence; but come what will, circumstances will never drive me to do or say what could in reality degrade myself."

In the state of health to which I was reduced, confined to my bed or stretched on my couch, incapable of movement, and in ceaseless pain, which allowed me only at short intervals the power of reading, I had opportunity enough to reflect on what had happened, and to decide on the course which was left me to follow. To go abroad, if I could get permission, was the only determinate wish I had; but affection for my son interposed an obstacle. His affairs, of which he took but little care, were in a deranged state; and were I, on whom his hopes chiefly rested for the payment of his debts, instead of personally superintending and making the most of my property, to spend all I had

abroad, he might find himself eventually, as to income, I feared, in a state below mediocrity.

A retrospect of the past was not without its consolations. A certain firmness and disinterestedness of character which had stood the test of various trials, if they did not supply all deficiencies, at least had proved my sure and never-failing support in adversity. I had been always on my guard against the late empress's favourites, with some of whom, I was well aware, it had been an object to drive me into such extremities with her majesty, by fomenting every passing cause of discontent, as would lead me to forget myself, and draw down on me the deserved resentment of my sovereign, by some indiscreet display of my natural warmth of temper.

Amongst others who had projects of this nature was Count Momonoff; but happening to have a little more sagacity than most of his predecessors, he discovered that I was not to be entrapped by such an artifice, and he rather chose to compass my disgrace by some bold attacks under his own hand, on me and my son,—a course calculated, I must confess, to exasperate me enough for the purpose intended. But fortunately, my attachment to my sovereign was founded on a proper basis of respect; and experience having taught me how little I was indebted to the good will of those gentlemen, the favourites, whom, far from idolizing when they were in power, like the rest of the world, I had never

deigned to flatter so far as even to acknowledge their influence, I was at no loss to distinguish in her majesty's proceedings towards me that which was the result of their intrigues, and that which sprung from her own natural impulse.

My grief, I had almost said my despair, at a loss so irreparable as that which my country was called upon to suffer in the death of the empress, was not aggravated by any feelings of self-reproach from reflections on my own conduct, and the part I had uniformly acted; these were all indeed of a kind rather suited, in this moment of private distress, and alarming crisis of public affairs, to tranquillize and soothe my mind.

From the very first hour of Paul's accession to the throne, he manifested the utmost hatred and contempt for the memory of his mother, and hastened to change or destroy all she had done. The most arbitrary and most fantastic acts were substituted in place of some of her wisest measures of policy. Nominations to, and dismissals from, public offices, followed each other in such immediate succession, that scarcely had the Gazette announced a new appointment before the place was again made vacant by the caprice of the emperor. No one who had public business to transact knew to whom he ought to address himself. To a general sentiment of terror arising from this objectless abuse of power, which annihilated not only public but private confidence, succeeded a fatal stupor, which threatened

the extinction of the very spring of all virtue—the love of one's country.

Thoroughly sick at heart, and full of fears for my friends, my relatives, and my country, I was absolutely appalled at the frightful picture of evils which my imagination represented, and I existed only in the hope that life itself was drawing to a close.

The prediction I had uttered, that the emperor would continue to persecute me, was thus fulfilled. Lieutenant-Colonel Laptoff, a distant relation of my grandmother, in whose promotion I had been somewhat instrumental, came to see me, to spend a single evening at my house, before he rejoined his regiment, from which, with difficulty, he had obtained leave of absence, and had a little transgressed it on account of the illness of his father. After sitting with me till midnight, I bade him go and take some repose. About three o'clock in the morning, I was disturbed by my maid, who came to say that M. de Laptoff had a letter for me, and wished to speak with me. It would be quite time enough, I told her, in the morning, and that rest was very necessary after his journey. I was presently informed that the letter in question was brought express from Moscow.

Convinced that some new persecution awaited me, I desired to see M. de Laptoff, who presented me with a letter from M. Ismailoff, the governor-general. It contained an order from the emperor that I should instantly depart from Troitskoe, and

take up my residence on an estate of my son's, situated between two towns which were named, in the northern part of the government of Novogorod, and there await his further pleasure.

I desired that my daughter might be called up, and dictating my answer to the governor through her, informed him, that ready as I was to obey the emperor's commands, and wholly indifferent as to the spot where I might happen to end my days, or continue to vegetate, it was impossible for me to repair immediately to a place which I had never even visited whilst in the management of my son's affairs, and knew not at that moment how to seek. Ignorant of the precise place appointed for my exile, as of the road leading to it, I must either wander, I told him, through unknown cross-roads, (as it might not be prudent to approach the imperial residence,) or await the return of a messenger whom I would dispatch to Moscow with the returning courier, to learn from my son's steward whether some peasant belonging to the estate in question could not be found there, to serve me as a guide.

I had no easy task to compose the feelings of my daughter, who clung to my knees in floods of tears. Some one awakened Miss Bates, a most respectable and amiable person, who had been some time in my family, to inform her of the frightful news, which was spreading through the whole house, and filling every creature with consternation. Seeing her presently enter my chamber, trembling like an

aspen leaf, I besought her, before she yielded to the suggestions of her affectionate attachment to me, calmly to reflect how entirely she was her own mistress, and perfectly at liberty either to remain at Troitskoe, or at my house in Moscow, as long as it was convenient to her.

She told me, with much firmness, that she had formed her resolution, and no human power should prevent her from following me into exile. I embraced her, and we wept like children.

M. Laptoff, as soon as he had delivered my letter to the courier, and had dispatched a servant along with him to Moscow, came back to me, and with a countenance quite calm, declared his intention of seeing me safe to my journey's end.

I expostulated with him, and strongly protested against his taking such a step; urging him to consider the consequences it would bring on himself, as well as the bitter regret which I should be made to feel in becoming the cause, however unwillingly, of his ruin. I reminded him that he had already, by several days, exceeded his leave of absence; that my journey through unknown cross-roads, and with my own horses, might, from various causes, be retarded and lengthened to an indefinite period; that in accompanying me he would infallibly expose himself to be treated as a deserter; and I exhorted him to abandon an intention which, as it shewed a more than common interest in my fate, would greatly aggravate the offence, and probably provoke

the emperor to reduce him to the rank of a private soldier. I used every argument which alarm on his account suggested, but in vain. Soldier, colonel, general, all was at that moment alike to him, and all equally indifferent.

"I hope," said he, "you will not order your people to turn me out; for if you do not give me a place among your attendants, I am resolved to take post behind your kibitka, and nothing shall force me from my purpose of seeing the spot to which they have condemned you."

Being well acquainted with the lofty and somewhat obstinate spirit of my young friend, I ceased to oppose unavailing obstacles to his wishes; dreading, indeed, to make matters worse, by not seeming to participate in his fault, and by throwing wholly upon himself all the odium of his attending me into exile. The lively satisfaction he evinced on having at length gained his point, and extorted from me something like acquiescence, was proof enough, if proof were wanting, of his sincere interest in my welfare.

There was one circumstance, at the time unknown to me, which had greatly increased his fears on my account. A mysterious stranger, it appears, had lately arrived in the neighbourhood, who was often observed lurking about my house and village, with his pen in hand, taking notes of all he could see or hear. In a moment of drunkenness, this fellow told his secret, and avowed himself a spy

sent to corrupt my servants, for the purpose of learning from them, and committing to paper, everything that was passing about me,—such as the names of the persons in my house, of those who frequented it, the subjects of our conversation at table &c.; and he further confessed, that a plot was laid to surprise me on my journey, to drag me from my friends, and to carry me off into the remotest part of Siberia.

I was thus, without suspecting it, in the power of every creature who approached me. Any one ill-disposed person among my servants might safely then have destroyed my fortune, and made his own, by simply turning informer—a trade in those days far above all others.

A peasant belonging to the village whither I was commanded to repair was fortunately found at Moscow. The news of what had occurred had already brought down my niece, Princess Dolgorouky, who remained with me till my departure from Troitskoe.

I had then living with me as part of my family, the daughters of two of my cousins, Mlles. Istlainoff and Kotchtoff; the latter young lady having been placed by her parents wholly under my care. Notwithstanding the consolation I should have had in her society, and her earnest desire to share my fortunes in banishment, I could not conscientiously consent to such a sacrifice, as her health was delicate, and required not only great care, but the best medical aid which our towns afforded. I wrote,

therefore, to her father, who was at Moscow, begging him to come and take away his daughter, as well as her cousin. He arrived the day before my departure, and on the following one set off with my two relatives; promising to convey Mlle. Istlainoff to her mother, and to let me hear frequently of his daughter.

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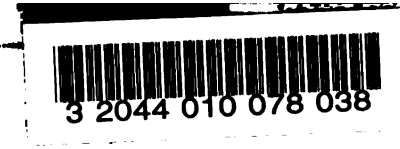

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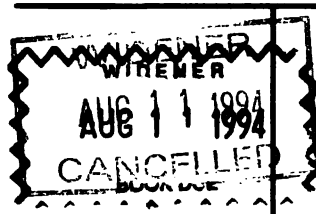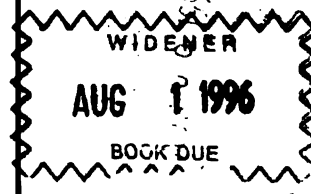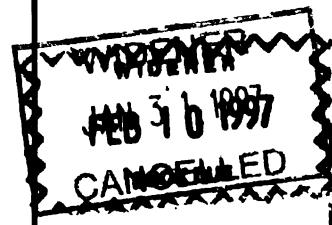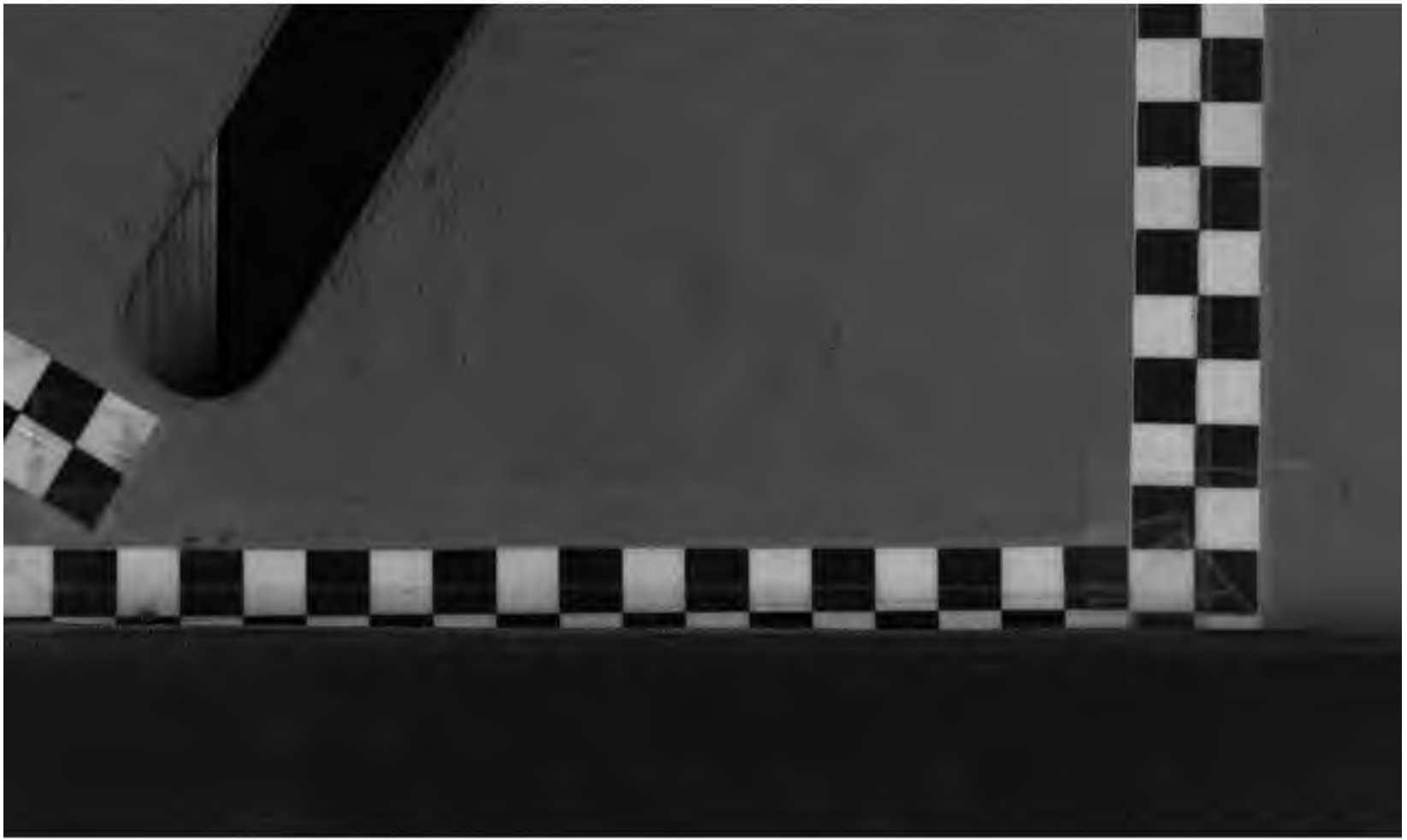
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